RELATIONS

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

RELATIONS

FICTION BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE GAY-DOMBEYS
MRS. WARREN'S DAUGHTER
THE MAN WHO DID THE RIGHT THING
THE VENEERINGS
LITTLE LIFE-STORIES

RELATIONS

BY

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

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CONTENTS

COWANGERONG	*page* 1
THE VOYAGE HOME	22
IRELAND IN THE LULL	35
HERBRAND AND CLARIBEL	46
RUPERT SEES IRELAND	58
REGENT'S PARK	69
DOROTHY, STEPHEN, AND THE WORBARROWS	85
CLARRY'S MARRIAGE	99
MORE MARRIAGES AND A DEATH	112
RUPERT RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA	136
ROBERT HOLROYD AND KUNAPIPPI	157
CARL FAZAKERLY	172
JUSTINA	198
RUPERT RETURNS	209
HE ENTERS PARLIAMENT	225
ARDNEY AND DULCIE	241
BACK TO AUSTRALIA	259
THE GREAT WAR	268
CLARIBEL'S SECOND MARRIAGE	274
THE SETTLING-UP AND SETTLING DOWN	293

CHAPTER I

COWANGERONG

IT was in the beginning of the Australian spring, November 1900. Cowangerong, where the scene opens, was little more than a hamlet in the mountains of New South Wales, amid a forest of tree-ferns, eucalypti, acacias, grevilleas, cedrelas, beech-trees, teak, and araucaria conifers, which was situated—abruptly towards the west—at an altitude of about three thousand feet above the right bank of the river Murrumbidgee, in its uppermost course. The hamlet in question, a quarter of a century back, probably consisted only of two foresters' houses, a general shop or store, and a fairly decent hotel, much favoured by newly-married couples and persons finding solace from affliction or a stimulus to health in the contemplation of beautiful and surprising scenery, rarely met with in Australia save in the regions of the south-east.

Here, at this season, there was normally quietude. The railway from Sydney was not far distant. There was a station at Williamsdale, within an hour and a half's drive, along a passable road; and hither—perhaps well advised—the newly-married couple, Rupert Cuthbertson and Adeliza—born a Parkyns—had come from Sydney to spend a portion of their honeymoon. My readers might at once be told that Rupert Cuthbertson was deemed a rich young man in the Australia of 1900. He was then aged about thirty; tall—five foot eleven inches, stoutly built,

weathered and tanned after eight years of rough mining work in Queensland and northern New South Wales. In the course of these eight years, by several strokes of supreme good luck, aided by an almost uncanny knowledge of mineralogy and metallurgy, he had made a fortune of a hundred and twenty or thirty thousand pounds. Various complications connected with engineering, chemistry, and the search for capital to put into this lucrative mining business drew him down to Sydney in 1899, and into Government circles there. His good looks, the standing of his father as a Canon in an old cathedral town in England, his intelligence and education, made the entry into Government House easy. He danced well enough for Australia in 1899 to be partner to the two elder daughters of the Governor, the Earl of Tipperary. He took to dancing first with the eldest—Lady Justina —and then more particularly with the second of these two young women.

The Countess of Tipperary had four daughters in all as well as four sons. But the two youngest girls had not come out with their parents to Australia. They had remained in Ireland in charge of an aunt and at a boarding school in Dublin.

In the summer of 1900, Rupert, after several returns to the southern Queensland border to attend to mining rights and discoveries and the placing of his new capital, had come back to Sydney and proposed for the hand of Lady Adeliza Parkyns. This necessitated a frank exposure of his circumstances. He offered to settle twenty thousand pounds on Adeliza and her

children. Such a sum in those days would yield her an income of a thousand pounds a year. Her father was an impoverished peer, disappointed at discovering that there was very little opportunity of putting by any saving from his salary as Governor of the senior Australian State. He still had, after Adeliza's marriage, three other girls and four boys to provide for and to finance ; so after a month or six weeks, spent in cablegramming inquiries, he came to smile in approval on this bestowal of his second daughter on what seemed a thoroughly good type of husband, English in extraction, and soundly well off.

So the marriage had taken place at the beginning of November : the young couple, after a day or two at Parramatta, had started on the long journey of about 140 miles to Williamsdale and Cowangerong, and had just reached the hotel at the latter place in time for a rather late breakfast. Adeliza had brought with her a Swiss or French maid—she was not sure at that date about the nationality, and had begun to suspect her of some vague connection with New Caledonia, the French penal settlement in the Pacific, where her father seemed to live, either as a warder or a political prisoner. Rupert had a man-servant—Robert Holroyd—whom he had picked up four years before in Queensland, a handy man who turned his hand to anything—valeting, using a pickaxe, searching for gold, cooking an omelette or a damper, or brushing clothes and cleaning guns. These two followers were responsible for the honeymoon luggage, and were left behind in the hotel to see it bestowed and arranged

in the bridal suite—the hotel existed principally as a honeymoon resort.

But the young couple were keen to finish their substantial breakfast and to get away from human voices into the woods and be alone—to look forth on fine scenery and pour out confidences to each other. They were very much in love : only four days married : in perfect health. He, Rupert, was thirty years old, as I have already said ; she, Adeliza, was just twenty-three.

'Let 's sit here, dear,' said Rupert. 'Here' was at the top of a precipitous descent through forest on the westward limit of the hotel grounds. About two thousand feet below—more or less—they could see in sections the course of the Murrumbidgee ; there a streak of sky-blue stream, concealed at the next stage by masses of trees, then visible in places as specks of white foam. Away, beyond it, to the west, rose blue, table-topped mountain ridges, forested nearly to the topmost edge—a scented forest, it seemed, aromatic, no doubt, like the woodland immediately below them, lazily stirred to remit its perfumes by a gentle westward wind. . . .

'This is altogether delightful, Rupy,' said Adeliza ; '. . . may I call you that ? '

'Call me anything you like, so long as it is not abuse,' said Rupert, his far-sighted eyes resting on the distant horizon of mountain ridges.

'*Abuse ?* As though I could abuse you ! ' exclaimed the honeymoon wife, 'when you are the most darling thing I ever knew. . . .'

'I hope you will always regard me in that light: and you will be the same in my eyes. . . .'

'*Darling!*'

'DARLING!'

(Mutual embraces.)

'And now let 's be sensible,' said Rupert, encircling his wife round the waist. (Women still had well-marked waists and long flounced skirts and emphasized shoulders in the pretty fashions of 1900.) 'And talk over our plans for the immediate future. This is the first quiet hour we have had since we married. . . .'

'I know! . . . We are going home to England, aren't we? How lovely that will be!'

'It will. But we must not go in too much of a hurry. I 've got a little over a hundred thousand pounds invested—safe securities too—and in addition, I have settled, as you know, some twenty thousand pounds on you, enough to provide you with a thousand a year of your own. . . . Well, I yearn for an English career now I have made enough money—or what seems enough. The mining work will be carried on by the company, and I shall draw something from it through the shares I have left in; but I have *got* something like a hundred thousand pounds, safe, invested at somewhere about five per cent. That gives me . . . Oh! you *are* a darling. . . . I love the way your hair curls round your temples. . . . Is it natural? . . .'

'Of course! We 're all rather curly-haired, we Parkynses. . . . But go on about your affairs. . . .'

(Embraces, and a sounding kiss.)

'Well . . . What was I saying? Oh, about money.

. . . When we are landed in England I ought to have a clear five thousand a year, and a sum of a few thousand pounds to play with, to set up house with. . . . I 've a vague desire when we are there to go in for Parliament and do all I can to draw the Empire together. This beastly South African War into which we have blundered . . .'

'I know! Isn't it horrible! I have already lost two of my cousins . . . both killed on Buller's staff . . . and my second brother . . . I ought to say now *our* second brother . . . Herbrand, "Bertie," you know . . . with Roberts's Army . . . has been wounded, as you have heard already. . . . *When* will it be over? . . .'

'I was thinking, dearest one, when we are ready to start for home—*home* I like to call it, though we shall have to make our home when we are arrived, because my people at Winchester will not be able to put us up for long. Well, I was thinking if this war is not finished by the time we start we might go home by the Cape and just look in and see how things are shaping. . . . Are you a good sailor?'

'Very good, I think. I simply loved yachting and boat sailing at home in Ireland, on Lough Derg. Of course we came out by the Suez Canal in a wonderful steamer and at a good season. . . .'

'Well then, I will try and arrange to go to England round the Cape. P'r'aps break the journey at Cape Town for a month, and then go on from there. . . . Now let 's take a ramble in the woods, and then back for lunch. . . . Isn't the spring lovely here, looking

down from these heights? I suppose you know the flowers as well as I do?'

'No, I don't think so. I have only been out a little more than a year, and everything is so puzzling and unlike its English-sounding name. . . . Aren't those "flame trees" down below? Those brilliant scarlet-crimson blossoms?'

'Yes, you are right; and see the acacias coming into bloom. You know there are about three hundred different species of acacia in Australia? . . .'

'*Are* there? You see, like most English girls—I am really Irish in the main, but they are just the same—I know nothing about botany. . . .'

'Well, I have had to learn a good deal about it. . . . Besides, it interests me. . . .'

'*Darling!* And yet you ride well, you shoot well . . . men say. . . . You are all that is most manly. . . . And yet you know a lot about plants!'

'I know far too little. . . . But what I do know is chiefly about distributional botany. I mugged it up a good deal after I came out here. At Rugby they wearied me over cellular structure. . . . That side never tempted me. What I wanted to learn since I have been out in the world is *distribution*. What are the most striking and peculiar plants in each chief locality. . . . But don't let 's be too scientific on our honeymoon. Here . . . (plucking a warratah) . . . Here! this is what they call the "native tulip." Let me pin it. . . . Got a pin? No? Well, I 've one somewhere in my lapel. . . . The "native tulip"! No more of a tulip than I am; but then most of

Australia was opened up and named by ignorant people, ignorant of botany or zoology.'

And so they walked on. Here and there the way was so rough that Rupert persisted he must carry Addie ; and although she felt she was nearly as good a climber as he, it was delicious when you were very much in love with a man, and he your own legitimate husband, to be lifted up in his strong arms. . . .

Their love dalliance, however, was harshly interrupted by the crack of guns, a turn in events which took them completely by surprise. They therefore sought the more open tracks, and walked soberly like a married couple of five years' standing.

'What on earth can they be firing at in these quiet, lonely wilds ?' inquired Adeliza.

'Can't say, I am sure. There is very little in the way of wild creatures in this forest, except birds. It is a great pity : the native white Australians are still so indiscriminatingly bloodthirsty.'

At this moment his speech was interrupted by the surging forward towards the hotel of a number—six or seven—of over-healthy young men. As this group divided, so as not to hustle the lady, and passed ahead on either side, their trophies were noticeable—paroquets of gorgeous plumage, two or three cockatoos, a piping crow, a bandicoot, and a dasyure, which of course was called the 'native cat.' One or two of the youths as they passed stole a glance at Addie. She was certainly a very pretty girl. But pretty girls as regards features are common enough in Australia.

What perhaps struck them as a little out of the common run was her Irish complexion, still pink and white, though she had been nearly eighteen months away from the moist, cool climate of Ireland.

Rupert was frowning a good deal over the spoils of the chase exhibited as the group passed ahead with loud and joyous conversation.

'I suppose this group of sportsmen must have come to the hotel after we had finished breakfast.'

But at the entrance of the hostelry he sighted the proprietor or the manager, a pleasant-looking man who was said to have been employed in some railway capacity, building the line to Oodnadatta in Central Australia. He had married a well-dowered wife, and had given up engineering work to start this hotel as a possibly profitable speculation. It was situated amid charming, impressive scenery, at no great distance from the site where it was hoped the new Federal capital of Australia was about to be founded. One or two facetious politicians had told him, after spending a week-end at his hostelry, that he was a patriotic person, to have founded and to run a honeymoon resort of this description which did much to encourage marriages and the growth of population.

He was already aware of the importance of Rupert in the mining world, and still more of the status of the lady whom he had married. Therefore his reception of them on their return from their stroll was cordial, and as nearly respectful as is possible in Australia, where between whites there is nothing approaching subservience.

'What is this band of youths returning with the birds and beasts they have shot, and why is *anybody* allowed to kill anything in these woods?'

'They are a party of young engineers from the new gold mines, twenty or thirty miles away. It is a pity perhaps that they should shoot the birds hereabout; but what will you? They are taking a holiday and want to let off a gun.'

'Just so,' was all that Rupert replied, though he still frowned as he entered the hotel.

A good lunch was served. Rupert and Addie had a little table apart, and so did Robert and Élise, who had discreetly chosen theirs at the other end of the dining-room. The seven rather noisy young men, joined presently by an eighth who looked somewhat more studious, ranged themselves along both sides of a centre table.

'The sight of these persons seems to have made you silent and thoughtful,' said Addie in a lowered voice. 'I am sorry that they come to interrupt our honeymoon, but they seem a harmless lot, and one or two of them are quite nice-looking. I suppose they are mining engineers?'

'Yes. We must move discreetly, but the first sight of them infuriated me. There are some things I cannot stand in Australia. I suppose I might sum it up by saying "that confounded ignorance of the white Australians." Here they are, to begin with, in a continent which has been most unfairly treated by Providence. It has very little fine scenery—in the interior; yet in the two or three mountainous districts

like this they are cutting down the timber at a frightful rate without any consideration of rainfall—don't pass those crayfishes, by the bye; they are really good—and if you are going to travel about with me for a bit before you come to England, you will find, outside a few hotels and a few coast towns and three or four private houses, the diet in Australia and the cooking are very plain.'

Addie took a crayfish, and Rupert restrained himself in time from talking about the peculiar distribution of the southern crustaceans.

'But, as I was saying, or going to say, about Australian wild life, this poor continent has been very badly treated in the distribution of beasts and even of birds; yet it has had a wonderful development in the way of parrots, bower-birds, finches, and some other things. But here before us, at this hotel, is an example of young Australian manhood going out on a holiday to blaze away at the birds in these woods. The thoughtlessness of it disgusts me, but I must hold myself in. I expect, even, I am boring *you*.'

'You could not do that, when you are interested in a subject. But I am afraid I have never given much attention to wild birds and beasts. I do remember, however, one summer before we came out here being taken for a week's trip to Achill Island—that is off the west coast of Ireland—and being positively startled and delighted there by the things I saw. Choughs—I think they call them—birds with curved scarlet beaks rather like Australian piping crows—hopping and flying about the streets of the villages and undisturbed

by the people; wild swans on the little lakes, wild ducks and geese, wild goats on the mountains—wherever you went there was some bird or beast in the landscape that attracted your eyes. Not many English people came there then, and those that did so were mainly naturalists who only wanted to study, not to kill the wild creatures.'

'Quite so. I have never been to Ireland. Consequently I have not seen Achill Island, and I expect as soon as its charms come to be better known—I believe they have continued the railway so as to make the island easier to get at—I expect quite enough English will go over to shoot down the swans and the wild goats and the choughs.'

They finished their repast. Perhaps Rupert's voice had risen above the low level on which he had begun to talk, and a word or two had reached the quick ears of the shooting party. The eighth member of the group at the central table stayed behind, when the others rose and boisterously quitted the room for a smoke on the verandah.

'May I introduce myself without formality? My name is Eversley. I caught a word or two of what you were saying, and I am here to apologize for my companions on this trip. They are thoroughly decent boys, I can assure you, and are working devilish hard in the mines. Come out on to the verandah and let me introduce you, though they more or less know who you are and who your lady is.'

Rupert went out with Mr. Eversley, lit a cigar or a cheroot, and was formally introduced to the seven

young men. They saw to his acquiring a comfortable chair, and evidently esteemed the introduction as a privilege.

'Mr. Cuthbertson has got nice manners, as you see, but he is not too well pleased with you boys for the way in which you have been spending your morning,' said Eversley.

'Why, what have we been doing that 's wrong?' two or three exclaimed in surprise.

'Don't think me a prig or an unreasonable person,' said Rupert. 'Think me at worst a well-meaning eccentric who cannot bear to see birds and beasts not actually harmful to humanity killed, either in the process of learning to shoot adroitly or because they have got pretty feathers or strange plumage or curiously spotted skins. You are all, I should think, Australian born, and as regards physique a credit to Australia. You are most of you too young' (his eye wandered over the assembly) 'to have come out from the Old Country. I was born and educated in England, I admit; but I have been in Australia nearly nine years, since I was twenty-one, and I have made enough money now to go home and have a good rest before I come out again. I am almost an Australian, you see. If wealth brings happiness—as I hope it does—I shall owe all my happiness in life to Australia—and that is my only excuse for regretting—as I do most bitterly—foolishly, you will think—the destruction which is going on everywhere, unchecked, of the curious, beautiful fauna of Australia. I suppose I felt something of this kind this morning when you

followed me out of the wood with a variety of dead birds and one or two beasts. . . . You know I am only thirty after all, and you are probably voting me silently a tedious old bore . . .'

'No, we are not; are we, boys?' said their leader.

A rather dubious denial followed. The party was stricken with shyness: eyes were averted or humorous glances were exchanged. Then one of them blurted:

'I am very sorry now we killed the birds, but we wanted their feathers to send to our sweethearts or our sisters, and as to the native cat, I shot it because I thought it did nothing but harm. However, we won't shoot any more whilst we are here, if you,' and then the speaker wobbled and hesitated and went on, 'if you, sir, would tell us something about your discoveries? The landlord of this inn says you have made a pot of money discovering gold mines or opals, and that you have married the Governor's daughter at Sydney.'

Rupert's face lit up. 'I have made nothing like as much as some Australians I know; I am very far from being a millionaire. But in my nine years out here I have done pretty well; and I have just married the Governor's daughter, which piece of luck is worth many times more than my discoveries have brought me.'

'Well, I back up what these boys say. Won't you give us some sort of lecture whilst you are here?'

'Would you care for it really?'

They endorsed their opinion that it would immensely add to the charm of their holiday at the Hotel Oodnadatta, and that they would willingly give up shooting if he would tell them about his discoveries.

So Rupert consented. The first lecture was summarily fixed for eight o'clock that evening, and the second and conclusive one should be held at the same hour on the following Sunday.

He then rejoined Addie, who in the meantime had gone upstairs with her maid to inspect her honeymoon clothing, released from trunks and boxes, and had found it, of course, to be terribly crushed by the packing.

'Now, what do you think I have let myself in for, on the sixth day of our honeymoon? I have promised to give two lectures, one to-night and the other next Sunday, on Australia! I have got no slides, so I cannot illustrate them, but I dare say we can raise something like a blackboard and some white chalk, and I can make a few illustrations as I go along to demonstrate my points. I want to convert those seven young men into protectors of the Australian fauna and flora.'

'Very well, dear, if it amuses you. It won't upset me; and really my clothes are in such a state that I shall give myself up to two days' consideration of them. How long are we going to stay here?'

'Well, we might move next Monday, unless you wish to stop longer. I have had once or twice a wild notion that I would like to leave Élise behind here against our return, so that your best clothes may not

be too often packed and unpacked ; and take you off—with Robert to help us and look after us—whilst I go my round of our principal mining centres. The journeying will be rather rough, I fear ; but you are a good rider. The food and accommodation will be rougher still. Would you sooner stop behind here with Élise, or go back to Sydney ? '

' Neither. If I am not a nuisance, I should love to come with you. I don't care how rough it is. I should like to visit the mines, and really see something of wild life. Sydney, Parramatta, and most of the places I have stayed in or passed through have always struck me as appallingly civilized. This place has a faint, faint resemblance to Switzerland. I will do whatever you like ; but as you have asked me to choose, I would *choose* not to be separated from you, all the rest of the time we are in Australia. If you want to explore, I should love to explore too. I think it is an excellent plan, if you won't mind the cost, to leave Élise here, with all my luggage which is superfluous for travelling in the interior. Some of the things perhaps we could send back to Sydney.'

So this was the plan they adopted. Rupert gave his first lecture, which he rendered as informal as possible. He talked to the boys and the other few guests at the hotel and the hotel staff of six or seven persons about the story of Australia : how—not so long ago, as time is now measured—eastern Australia was united with Tasmania on the south and New Guinea on the north, and a broad, shallow branch of the sea flowed southwards from the Gulf of Carpen-

taria and covered much of the land in the Artesian Basin between Central Australia on the west, Queensland and New South Wales on the east; how Man pushed his way thither many thousands of years ago, able to travel at that time over a continuous land surface from Further India to the island of Bali, beyond Java, and perhaps over doubtful sandbanks to Lombok; and thence to New Guinea and Queensland. Then he touched on the types of man that first came to Australia: the Tasmanian who wandered down along the sea coast from New Guinea, and the Australoid who followed; and all this time, save for the polite attentiveness of the audience, he was feeling very much severed from their thoughts. However, he went on to point out how the black Australoids, though they were of little repute in white Australia, were of intense interest to the few thousand thoughtful anthropologists who did not at present wield much influence among the thousand millions of existing humanity.

'These black fellows, you know, should be thought peculiarly interesting, because they are just living examples of what Europeans were like one or two hundred thousand years ago.'

Then he went on to treat of Australia's other marvellous links or strange developments—fishes with lungs, mammals that laid eggs, emeus—not long since extinct—which stood up thirteen feet above the ground, making the ostrich and even the New Zealand moa seem pygmies. He touched on many another survival of connecting forms in animal or plant life,

and he tried to do it in a sufficiently conversational speech to avoid the imputation of priggishness.

After the first lecture, the young mining engineers thanked him politely for the trouble he had taken, and admitted that most of the facts to which he had drawn their attention had never entered their heads before. Five persons of the hotel staff said nothing, out of shyness; but the proprietor of the hotel expressed warm appreciation, and corroborated some of his statements.

In the second discourse on the following Sunday Rupert explained how some of this knowledge had entered his mind while he was still a schoolboy at Rugby, owing to the presence there of a remarkable professor; how other facts and discoveries had impressed themselves on him whilst he worked in Australia. Then, feeling he had now aroused their interest, he went on to touch on his personal experiences, his struggles, his disasters, successes, divinations of this and that, realization of wild hopes; and on the Sunday night when his discourse was finished he received a unanimous vote of thanks from the entire audience, though he had an uncomfortable suspicion all the time that several would afterwards rate him as eccentric for wishing to save the native birds and beasts from extinction.

'*You* will, I fear, Addie——'

'Will what, dearest?'

'You will think me a strange sort of person for giving them—on my honeymoon—these talks about geology and natural history.'

'I am sure I shall not, though I confess my attention

wandered several times during your last speech; but that was owing to the mosquitoes or fleas or something which were biting at my ankles. Ireland seems to be the only region to which mosquitoes do not penetrate. But you know you are quite a public personage, with all the discoveries and the money that you have made; and it is only in Australia—and perhaps the United States—that you would be asked to give a lecture whilst you were spending your honeymoon.'

However, next day, with no sign of disapproval at the material of his address, the boys went back to Yass to their mining, drilling, burrowing, assaying work. Élise, with the traces of recent tears on her cheeks, settled down to keep watch and ward over her mistress's clothing; some honeymoon luggage was sent back to Sydney; and Rupert and his wife started north by rail and coach to visit the principal mining centres of his company.

This had been already put into order and renamed 'The Borderland Mining Company.' Rupert said that three years earlier he had hesitated over another name, 'The Holroyd Mining Company,' because amongst the samples that Holroyd brought in one day for examination were some which led to an extraordinary development in the discovery of tungsten, which had been previously known as 'wolfram'; Holroyd, who like himself, seemed to have an unusual luck in discovering things, had led them also into the possession of opal mines which had probably produced the finest opals the world had yet seen.

'I am going to impress this fact on you when we get

there, my dearest, by giving you as a wedding present the most beautiful opals you have ever seen. You shall have them made into a collar or a necklet or something to wear round your neck, or in whatever way you please. As to Holroyd,' he added, the man being present, silent, but in a broad grin, 'he is really becoming too well off to remain our servant any longer, but he foolishly chooses to do so—so there it is.'

Holroyd removed the apparatus of the meal he had been serving—it had satisfied sheer hunger, but was simply meat and bread, mealies, onions, and potatoes, treacle pudding, and tea for the quenching of thirst.

As to the mines, Addie was more mystified than instructed. She was inwardly—though she made no verbal complaint—more impressed with the discomfort of the dust and grit, the hideousness of the scarred landscape, than with the wealth and the wonders which the digging, mining, boring, blasting, sifting, whirring operations were producing. One or two of the men were quite good-looking, she confessed, when there was time for them to change their rough clothing and wash their hands and faces. One of them, high up in the hierarchy, had a French surname, but seemed to be sulky and downcast when she hesitatingly referred to it, and furnished no particulars in explanation. Two others had German surnames, but they were Australian born, and were obviously no fools in mineralogy. Here and there was a young Englishman, to judge by his accent and his ease of manner, his eye-glances of restrained admiration suggesting

thoughts of home, which brought an added colour to Addie's cheeks.

The whole tour, which lasted a full month of the Australian summer, was an obvious success. They rejoined Élise and paid her bill at the Hotel Oodnadatta, and then returned to Government House at Sydney to spend Christmas.

CHAPTER II

THE VOYAGE HOME

THEY had arrived off Cape Town on the morning of Wednesday, 23rd January 1901. The pronoun 'they' stands for Rupert and Lady Adeliza Cuthbertson, Rupert's man Robert Holroyd, Addie's maid Élise Paravol, the captain, officers, passengers and crew of the British steamer *Laidlaw*, steaming from Melbourne to London, via the Cape of Good Hope.

It would be time enough to land after they had had breakfast. Rupert could then determine at the steamer's office in Cape Town, whether he would pursue his voyage to London, or whether he and she would get off here and spend a month in Cape Colony.

There was, when they first arrived, a strange silence. The captain and the leading officers had not appeared when breakfast was served. The first-class passengers, eager to eat and to go on shore afterwards in a lovely morning of the full Cape summer, were startled in the middle of their repast by the arrival of the captain in their midst, who said in accents of gravity: 'Ladies and gentlemen! I have to announce to you the grave news of the death yesterday of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The news arrived here yesterday evening.'

Official circles in Cape Town had heard of the event on the previous night, and had been aware for two or three preceding days of the Queen's serious condition; but in that pre-wireless time the *Laidlaw*

had plunged through the southern seas from Australia to South Africa for ten days and more, unaware that the great Queen was even stricken.

'That seems a knock-down blow to our plans,' exclaimed Rupert, over the breakfast table. 'Perfectly *dreadful*!' said his wife inadequately.

'How 's the Boer war going?' shouted to the retreating captain an irrelevant, disloyal passenger; and concurrently there arose a babel of remarks and exclamations from the other thirty-three passengers addressed to no one in particular.

'This seems to mean a change of plans,' continued Rupert, 'for which, as it happens, I am not disinclined. I 've a kind of feeling that South Africa won't be very sympathetic under present management and war conditions, and——'

'Excuse me, sir,' said the purser of the ship, interrupting. 'Sorry to intrude on you at breakfast, but it 's on account of her ladyship's brother, who, they say, is coming on board seeking a passage home. He 's been wounded, but don't be alarmed, he——'

'It must be Bertie,' exclaimed Adeliza, rising hurriedly from her chair. 'Bertie, you know, "Herbrand," who is on Lord Roberts's staff. . . . Wounded? Yes, I knew, poor boy! Of course he must come on board! It will be splendid, our looking after him on the way home. When will he be here?'

'Well, I expect, my lady, some time in the early evening. He has telegraphed for a passage, or the surgeon has, from some hospital somewhere up country,

not very far away. We shall send a reply at once, saying there is room for him, and he has only to come in by train. We shall stay here till to-morrow afternoon. . . .'

Somewhere about eleven that morning, Rupert and Addie went on shore and found themselves in a perplexed, unusually quiet Cape Town. The black, brown, and yellow sections of the population were hushed, perturbed, silenced by the news. They all of them imagined the figure of the dead Queen to have possessed a far greater potency in politics than was actually and latterly the case; to have held the position of a Mother of all her peoples, of the coloured as much as of the white. Now that her restraining hand was numbed, who could tell what the white masters might not do? There was little sympathy in their hearts with the Boers: the Boers, they thought, would like to have enslaved them all if they came again to power. But what would the British white men do, if they were finally victorious in this struggle that was going on, and there was no great white Queen to withhold them?

The shops were most of them shut. They left cards at Government House, but understood that the Governor of Cape Colony was at his country residence, and the High Commissioner was in the Transvaal. They had lunch at an awestruck hotel, and were kept long waiting for their bill, which, when it came, was preposterous in its charges. Rupert could not bear the idea of involving his wife in any

protest about terms. He paid it and they walked out. His angry mind derived some solace from the beautiful Botanical Gardens. Here they paced up and down, and round about under the shade of palms from Java, cycads from Natal, tree ferns from New Zealand and Central Africa; found a cosy little cottage dispensing tea; and then, hiring a carriage driven by a Malay, went back to the harbour and so on to the steamer.

Here they learnt Bertie had just arrived. His soldier servant said that Captain Parkyns was having tea in his cabin. Adeliza went there under the soldier's guidance, and there were sounds of greeting, embracing—perhaps rather presumed than actually heard—and Rupert was presently cried for by a wife eager to introduce a favourite brother to a much-loved husband.

Rupert saw when he entered the cabin a very good-looking young man, obviously like his wife in face, and redundant with health; though care was still taken of his once-wounded leg—more care, perhaps, than was now strictly necessary. Handshakes ensue. Bertie obviously approves of his brother-in-law. As to his brother-in-law, he is not quite sure in his inmost mind that he approves of Bertie, though he is so touched at his wife's affection for her brother, that he resolves to give him every chance. The next evening they leave Cape Town, having slightly exceeded the length of their stay to pick up as many passengers as possible, a few of whom profess to be summoned home by some portentous need occasioned

by the Queen's death. 'You won't be in time for her funeral, anyway,' says the facetious Bertie, who speaks to all and every one without an introduction, who is ribald and singularly free of speech, but offends no woman on board, 'because he is so very good-looking,' and few men; either for the same reason, or because he is so ready to lose money at cards or on bets over the ship's speed, to tell a good—which means a libidinous—story, or to listen and applaud when you do the same.

They have not been a week steaming homewards from Cape Town when whispers, giggles, nudges, and hints begin to circulate respecting Bertie and Mrs. Toomis (pronounced 'Tooms'). Mrs. Toomis is the good-looking wife of an army captain (not on board), and is of South African not to say Boer origin. Her maiden name was a Dutch one; her build, her golden — real golden — hair, grey eyes, clear complexion testify to her Dutch origin. Bertie is seen by a steward slithering out of her cabin at 5 A.M. The story reaches Rupert's ears. He interrogates his brother-in-law. Bertie explains that her surname recalled fond memories of his father's place in Tipperary — Toomyvara — and he couldn't resist her charms. 'Besides, the poor woman is in a devil of a fix over some money trouble of her husband's . . . wanted my advice . . . and then began crying . . . till I made her shut up. . . .' Rupert eventually lends him three hundred pounds to enable him to meet financial troubles of his own on reaching London; and finds he has paid away of this a hundred pounds to

the necessitous Mrs. Toomis. Bertie, in fact, escorts her from the docks on the far outskirts of London to Paddington, whence she is proceeding to her husband's home . . . and then himself disappears for a time, in the vortex of London. 'Got to get some clothes. . . . Report myself . . . look up some old pals . . . but I 'll find you out before long. . . .'

Rupert and Addie, both a little bewildered, proceed with man and maid and luggage to some much over-praised new hotel, near Piccadilly. They spend a week in London, shopping, theatres—reopened since the Queen's funeral. Addie looks up some relations; they are asked to informal, but rather jolly, little lunches; and Rupert's people at Winchester having been early apprised of their arrival, press them to come and stay.

Winchester at the end of February 1901 is not as attractive as it might be. The Canon's house in the Close is unfamiliar to Rupert, who has been away from home nine years and had not seen it before. They arrive at Winchester station in the afternoon. As the train slows down, Rupert, leaning out of window, exclaims: 'There 's mother! Gad! but she 's grown older in nine years!' The train stops. Addie's maid, Rupert's man, hurriedly descend from the second class and come forward to meet their master and mistress and inquire into luggage questions. Élise, Addie notices, is getting quite fluent in her English, which already sounds very 'cockney,' having been learnt first in Australia, wherein a cockney accent has been ingrained. 'She 's getting quite a

pretty girl,' thinks her mistress, with a side glance, before giving herself up to be embraced by her mother-in law, and welcomed by her husband's father, the Canon, canonically dressed and a little pompous. Still, a nice-looking old gentleman; rather tall, whiskers, moustache and beard abundant, whitish-grey hair on his head. He is known at the station evidently, and his welcome constitutes quite a ceremony. 'My well-to-do son, from Australia,' he has evidently been saying before their arrival.

Rupert's mother, for a moment, strikes Addie as looking a little 'common,' but the thought is at once dismissed from her mind as unorthodox. Rupert has told her she was a Miss Swears—a distant relation, he admitted, of a famous millinery firm. . . . But for the dowry she brought his father, he and his brothers and sisters could not have been so well educated. . . .

Presently they are driving away to the Cathedral Close, where the Canon's residence is situated. . . . 'Your new home, me boy,' says the Canon; 'better than what you remember of Witney and the parsonage there.'

Yes, it has a more ancient, more distinguished appearance—seventeenth century, apparently. But its bedroom accommodation, Rupert realizes, will not suffice for his party of four. His man must sleep out. That has been already arranged by his mother, who goes on to explain over the tea-table that, being an old-fashioned woman, she does not hold with husbands and wives requiring separate bedroom accommodation.

The Canon hums an assent to this principle, and Rupert taps a tune with his fingers and breaks into another subject of discussion: his brothers and sisters. His eldest sister, Janet, is here at home. She has been pouring out tea. She has the tragic face of an invalid of twenty-eight. Peggy, the youngest, is also here, a voluble and rather gawky schoolgirl. His eldest brother, the Reverend Francis, he is reminded by his mother, is a curate and already married and a prospective father, living at Littlehampton. His younger brother, Ardney, is an engineer, and has to live away at some works in the Midlands. The youngest of the family, Meredith —'This is Meredith,' says his mother, pointing out the embarrassed youth of nineteen: 'He is trying to get into Cooper's Hill — Indian Forestry Service, don't you know? — That accounts for all of them,' she says, turning to her new daughter-in-law, 'except Dorothy, you know, who is married and living away near Oxford with her husband—Tell you all about her, by and bye.'

Adeliza shows herself very adaptable—'*point du tout difficile*,'—as Élise comments—to her new conditions of life, staying at the Canon's house; but to Rupert after a few days it is already irksome. The emphasis with which his mother introduces them to her Winchester friends and clerical callers: 'My son, you know, from Australia, Rupert, and his wife, Lady Adeliza; quite newly married they are, and her father is the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of our oldest Australian colony. My son has made his

fortune there, and thinks of going in for English politics——' 'I wish, mother,' he says when the visitors are gone, 'you wouldn't give me away like this. They 'll only expect me to subscribe to their pet charities or the Clergy Sustentation Fund, or take up in Parliament their pet grievances. And what you consider a "fortune" won't go far in English politics.' But she is only pained by such protests, and thinks the dear boy should not undervalue himself.

'You ought to go and see your brother Francis,' she says one day, when Rupert is looking very bored. 'Littlehampton is not such a long way off, though the two railway companies make the journey as difficult as possible.'

'I suppose I ought, since he seems to be too busy with his church work to come here.'

'It isn't only that, but you see he only married a short time before you did, and his wife—well, to put it plainly, she 's expecting a baby and can't travel about just yet. I 'm sure they 'd be delighted to see you — Maud — that 's your new sister-in-law's name, Maud Featherby she was — wrote me a note two or three days ago, saying they could put you up.—They had a great desire to see Addie, though Maud was a little timid about inviting her.—They 've only got a tiny house——'

'All right! I 'll go there on Friday—write and let 'em know now.'

He does so. Then comes the Friday. He essays the complicated journey which lands him at Little-

hampton station after about three hours' wiggle-waggle at ten miles an hour.

He hardly recognizes Francis's face when he sees him. Nine years' absence, separation; and Francis has grown very clerical, like an understudy of his father. But there are not many other passengers in the little train. The tall curate only hesitates a minute, and the moustached, rather stalwart, sun-tanned traveller a few seconds, before they make for one another—'No luggage? Hoped you were coming to stay?' 'Not this time, old chap. Come over again some other day and bring my wife. Wanted just to see you; then I must go up to London.'

Nine years ago Rupert always knew his brother as 'Frank.' But before he left his mother, she had impressed on him that 'Frank' was hardly an appropriate name for a high-church clergyman: 'Francis,' —and he had really been christened 'Francis'—was far more suitable, and recalled the several saints of that name. He realizes that Frank or Francis has changed very much in the nine years' interval, from the time in which he was still called 'Frank.' Anything like intimacy with him, community of thought, now seems impossible, unless you were dying and he was bringing you the last sacraments. He lives in a world of his own, in which reason and scientific deductions play a very meagre part. Mediaevalism, traditions of the early Christian centuries, Oxford theology rule out of discussion or interest astronomy or the natural sciences. If he saw a paragraph in the *Times* or the *Daily Mail* headed 'Discoveries of

Ancient Man in Sussex,' or ' Java,' he would leave it unread and pass on to ' Consecration of St. Mary's Botolph,' or ' Canon Lightsome on the Mosaic Law.'

Rupert, however, walks away from the station with him along a newly-made road planted with new little trees (now, with a quarter of a century's growth, quite tall and shady), some of which have hardly made up their minds to grow, to a newly-built little house in St. Augustine's Road. Here he is received somewhat vacuously by an unwieldy sister-in-law, far gone in pregnancy, whose mind is clouded by the strain of her condition. A rather unsatisfactory lunch follows, in which the lobsters seem to have remained too long uneaten, and the mutton cutlets to have reached a stage of fatty tepidness, yet to have retained the smoky taste of a hurried cooking. An apple charlotte follows, and ill-made coffee — and Rupert is invited to smoke—and Maud presently alleges that on her doctor's advice she retires to lie down after a meal. Rupert makes no effort to dissuade her from this precautionary measure, and the two brothers sit for a few minutes silent. Rupert is smoking one of his own cigarettes. His brother smokes no more—it is Lent, or from some motive of self-mortification or economy he has given up smoking.

Presently Rupert says, as he has meant to do before leaving: ' Francis, old chap, I sent you no wedding present from Australia — Forget why; p'r'aps it was the thought of my own approaching wedding occupied my mind—or I didn't know what kind of things you might like—but in a sort of way I

remembered all the time—and—here it is—in this envelope.' And he extracts from his notebook an enclosed envelope which contains a cheque for fifty pounds.

Francis glances at the contents and visibly warms in manner. The fifty pounds will come in *most* usefully over the expenses of the approaching confinement. It is a welcome reminder of the fact that he has a rich brother, married to a peer's daughter. He begins presently to talk of the new church they are projecting at Littlehampton—St. John's—in the obvious hope that he may move his brother to a contribution or the promise of an ultimate contribution. But Rupert remains quite unimpressed and non-contributory; and, as the subject irks him, begins to inquire about his return train. He has to change at Ford, change again at Havant and again at Cosham, and once more at Eastleigh, before he is in the train for Winchester. And so at last, sending unreal protestations of affectionate regret to his sister-in-law, he sets out with his brother to walk to the station.

On his return home, he decides to go into the Midlands and see Ardney, his younger brother. Ardney, whose name was derived from a great-uncle who had died and left him nothing—as he bitterly remarked—appealed much more to Rupert's affection and interest. He had no religious views, was twenty-four years of age, intensely interested in machinery, in need of money—very probably, his elder brother guessed, over some sexual complication not likely to result in marriage. So Rupert gave him fifty pounds,

which removed the wrinkles from his brow, restored his good looks, and awakened in his brown eyes a glance of real devotion. He had so clearly expected nothing of the kind in telling his brother over a Midland hotel dinner (not a very good one) the fragments of his romance ; which under Rupert's cool comments lost their exaggerated interest.

To make things equal, Rupert on his return home sent the same sum (with excuses for deferring his visit) to his sister Dorothy at Woodstock, gave another fifty to the puzzled, tragic-looking Janet, and bestowed twenty pounds on the unexpecting, rapturous Meredith.

CHAPTER III

IRELAND IN THE LULL

MOTORS were still quite a new thing in 1901. Rupert manages to hire one and attempts driving to Bournemouth; but the chauffeur is ill-accustomed to the machine, and their outing ends in a mild accident. In later April he runs up to London again to look into business matters and present some of his letters of introduction. He inspects one or two flats and houses, with a view to settling down and feeling at ease in his own home. Then, taken by a sudden whim, by a letter that Addie reads him from her aunt, Lady Charlotte Cashel, he abruptly decides to go over to Ireland, see his wife's eldest brother and the family home at Toomyvara House.

To this decision he is also unconsciously led by his man Robert Holroyd, who, it appears, is of North Irish origin — entered the Mercantile Marine as a boy, deserted his ship as a young man when it visited Australia (lured by stories of gold-finding in Queensland), and after multifarious experiences, mostly unpleasant, did not find any gold to speak of, but found a right good master. Robert thinks Mr. Cuthbertson might discover a promising opening in Irish politics. The stories he tells act as a stimulant, especially at that awkward time, the spring of 1901, when politics have reached a lull owing to the Queen's death.

So Rupert quits Winchester in middle May for

Bristol and Avonmouth, lands at Waterford, thence takes train to Limerick, and after a ramshackle lunch at the Limerick station, enters another train of uncertain destination — possibly Dublin — and descends an hour later at Nenagh station, where, on inquiry, he finds an outside car awaiting him from the Toomyvara estate, with a letter from his brother-in-law, Lord Nenagh.

Then ensues a long but not tedious drive, which he estimates at twelve miles, though the driver puts it at 'a bit under nine'; for the much-bewhiskered, elderly coachman-butler is calculating in 'Irish' miles, which cover a longer distance than ours. They pass through the rather untidy, happy-go-lucky townlet of Toomyvara, and then, approaching the Devil's Bit Mountain, come into a very green land in the great beauty of the second week of May, and to the sources of the River Suir. These lie in Toomyvara Park. The parkland is in a kind of disorderly splendour of big trees coming into full leaf, hawthorns still in pink or white blossom, rich green grass, brakes of uncurling fern fronds, and stream courses, with the water hidden by a rank growth of pink campion, purple loosestrife, bulrushes, and creamy-white meadow-sweet.

At last the great house comes into view; a structure of the eighteenth century, in pretentious Corinthian architecture, which here and there has been efficiently but incongruously repaired in brick that, to be disguised, has been yellow-whitewashed. Rupert, before the side-car is drawn up against the

great pillared entrance, decides that the house is ugly, tasteless, but in tolerably efficient repair. Then any further thoughts are interrupted by the wide opening of the door and the appearance in the doorway of an ample, genially smiling lady, who at once wins his approval and shortly afterwards introduces herself as 'your Aunt Charlotte.' He soon realizes she is the sister of his mother-in-law—Lady Charlotte Cashel—'just me maiden name, you see; for more 's the pity I 've never been married, though I should have made a rare good wife and mother.' He decides instinctively she 's right; but there is no more time to meditate over the case, for her nephew, his eldest brother-in-law, is standing behind her in the hall, waiting with a serious face to greet him.

This is Lord Nenagh, the eldest son, and in his parents' absence the master of the house. A hearty handshake between them, and there remain to be greeted his sister-in-law, Claribel (an extremely pretty girl of twenty—the age is frankly stated by Aunt Charlotte), and a young brother-in-law, Branksome, who is pleasantly known as 'Branksome Chine,' from a childish association with Bournemouth. 'Branksome Chine,' it seems, in conversation over tea, is nineteen, about the age of Rupert's brother Meredith. He has the raw good looks of the growing youth, and is studying at home to pass into the Foreign Office.

'Goosegogs' (otherwise Gladys—approximately seventeen) and 'the Gasper' (baptismal name, Donald) are away at school. The last-named is

just past his fifteenth birthday, and brings up the full tale of the Tipperary offspring, eight in number, and all of them good-looking save the eldest, Nenagh (whose names at the font were given as Charles Francis Cleckheaton), and the youngest, Donald, 'who may turn out less of a misfit when he can have his nose-glands attended to.'

This is the closing comment of his eldest brother. Lord Nenagh must be about twenty-nine—a year or two younger than *he* is (considers Rupert). Nenagh announces himself—and the rest of the family acquiesce—as 'not good looking'; but he is big, a little lanky, and has a studious face. His eyes are rather deep-set, his eyebrows prominent and already shaggy. He has a brown moustache and a clipped beard, and his abundant head-hair grows rather low on his forehead. Claribel has already announced that his only real interest lies in astronomy. He admits the charge, explains to Rupert that he began studying it at Cambridge; and that he has fitted up an observatory here, and has a telescope ahead of most others in the United Kingdom—'got his glasses ground in Amsterdam.'

The first clear night after Rupert's arrival Nenagh takes him round to the observatory, ten minutes' walk from the house. It is a conversion of an old, old tower, said to be the relic of a Norman or Plantagenet invader's stronghold in the early days of the English conquest of Ireland. Lord Nenagh, some five years ago, received a legacy from his godmother of eight thousand pounds. This he expended in refashioning

the old stone tower into a well-equipped observatory (which he keeps locked) and installing his telescope therein. It is situated on an isolated, elevated point about five hundred feet above sea-level, on the ascending crags of the Devil's Mountain.

'Here you see my one passion unfolded: the study of the stars and planets. The search for Truth, I call it, though my progress is cruelly slow. It 's my religion, of course; better as regards honesty than the fables and unchecked legends believed in by most uneducated people. Still, I 'll admit, it is disheartening sometimes, when you 're up against a monetary difficulty, or your brothers and sisters are. My godmother died and left me enough money—just enough as it turned out—to buy this telescope and adapt the tower. Otherwise, all I have of my own is about a thousand pounds a year. Father lets me live here, more or less in charge of the place. I pay a small contribution to the housekeeping expenses. Aunt Charlotte has about the same amount—a thousand a year—like mother. Father is the impoverished descendant of a fairly wealthy stock. Irish property has gone down steadily in value during the last hundred years. I suppose our parent hasn't—outside his official salary, which I am told doesn't cover his expenses as Governor—more than ten thousand a year; and a lot of that goes in educating the family and putting out the boys in the world. Our brother Bertie is an extravagant young cuss. He returned, didn't he, with you? I mean in the same steamer from Cape Town—?—'

'Yes, he did. He was wounded in the war, we understood——'

'He was, no doubt—Oh! the chap doesn't lack courage—He was on Roberts's staff. But for the last three or four years he has been wasting his substance on women. If he'd only get married, we wouldn't mind—so much; but he is much more likely to get into the Divorce Court, and borrow the money from Father to pay the damages—However—now you must look at my telescope—Bertie is only a mundane detail. I can't show you the universe till night-time, but come and look at the mechanism of the thing.'

That night was ideal for a plunge into the infinite. There was no moon to speak of—the thin crescent had sunk before the darkness brought the stars out. Then Rupert saw some of the planets—Mars, especially; enlarged enough (imagination helping) to get a glimpse of its seas and continents, its polar ice-caps and tiny white clouds. He was shown Saturn and its rings, and the great globe of Jupiter with its nearly-parallel bands of clouds or gassy continents. They had left the house after an early dinner at seven, sat in the observatory till one in the morning, turning the telescope round the sky, drinking coffee and later on a liqueur, and talking their hearts out.

The next morning, after an ample breakfast, Rupert sought out Aunt Charlotte, returning from a housekeeping conference with the cook. 'I want your advice, your frank opinion, my dear Aunt. This place seems to me as near Paradise as any I can find

at the present time, and I can't bear to think of Addie being stranded at Winchester while I am enjoying myself here as I never remember doing anywhere else. May I send for her to join me ?——'

'But *of course*; whatever else did you expect me to say ?——'

'Well, p'r'aps nothing else, being the kind creature you are—but I wanted to be practical, to offer some contribution to the housekeeping expenses. You see, there 'll be Addie back in her old home, and if her appetite improves as mine has done, the two of us here for months and months will mean a serious increase of household expenses; and then there 'll be her maid—and there 's my man, as it is—if I keep him on. It means, in fact, an addition of four people to the household, all of them with good appetites. And here 's a further complication to be faced. If Addie comes—and if she doesn't, I must go to her—she must come to *stay*—long enough for her baby to be born here. I hope we aren't going to be disappointed, but we have an idea, you know, of one being on its way. That being so, if Addie is to make a long journey it must be *now*, and be followed by a long rest. Of course if her parents were at home it might be a considerable inconvenience our installing ourselves here. But as they will probably stay in Australia for another two or three years, and as this house is so large and has so many furnished rooms, it struck me that it might provide us with a delightful home while I am making up my mind what to do, where to take up politics. I 've conceived an enormous

liking for my eldest brother-in-law, the master of the house *pro tem.* When the other two young people come home from school, they would only find their elder sister back with them, and a new brother——'

'My dear Rupert, it is so obviously a good proposition, that if you go on defending it any longer you will rouse my suspicions. Consider the matter settled. I will talk to Charles—to dear old "Ninnie," as we ought to give up calling him—and he with his telescope too! He is perfectly sure to agree, and to-morrow you can write to Addie, and call her to come. You can have the suite in the left wing, if you like that. Your bedroom and hers, a little room for her maid, and two sitting-rooms . . . one of them can be your study. . . .'

'*Agreed!* You are an old dear. I feel as though I had known you for fifteen years, not five days. Though why I should call you "old," save in affection, *I* don't know.'

'My dear fellow! I am both old and young. My age, as you might discover, if you hunted it up in a very ancient *Debrett* in the library—nowadays they are too polite to put in ladies' ages—is fifty-four. I 'm two years older than Christabel, your mother-in-law. I once had a great, great disappointment over my love affairs, and grew into an old maid. When Christy married Tipp, as we used to call him, I helped her with the children. I got into the way of coming here to stay, especially when they were over the water, in London; and after Tipp, your father-in-law, got his appointment to the Australian Governorship,

Christy begged me to come here and live, and look after the children they could not take out with them. So there 's *my* story ! Enough of it at least for the next six months. I 'll go and talk to Ninnie—I mean Charles—and if he agrees, as I 'm sure he will, the thing 'll be settled. D' you think you could afford a thousand a year for living here ? It sounds rather grasping, only you like to live well, and we 'd keep a rare good table if you could afford that amount, and get in an extra maid or two. . . .'

' I could and would. It would even be a great economy for a time, till things settle down, and I have definitely chosen my career. When the old people return from Australia, they 'll probably want to live here in their old age : they 'd be fools if they didn't. Meantime, *we* should be fools if we didn't jump at your invitation and spend the first years of our married life here, under your eye.'

' Dear ! ' said Aunt Charlotte with emphasis. Then she went away to seek an interview with Charles, and win him over to the project. There was little doubt in Rupert's mind that he would require no persuasion. And so it turned out. He was away through much of the day at the town of Nenagh on some business concerning the estate ; but he burst into Rupert's bedroom as the latter was dressing for dinner, and said, ' Rupert, old chap, Auntie has told me of your proposition, and it suits me down to the ground, down to the ground. I only hope the old people will find Australia equally attractive. The house is huge—isn't it ? The estate produces a

lot of our food. Even if I wished to marry—which at present I don't — don't, till I 've discovered Jupiter's fifth moon, and Auntie has got tired of housekeeping—there 's room for my wife here, as well as for you and Addie. Let Addie come here and have first one baby and then another, and meantime you and I, when you 're not electioneering—if you 're fool enough to go in for politics—will keep our eyes on the planets. *So* glad, old chap; I really am.'

Hands were wrung.

The next day Addie was written to. She replied by telegram saying she would arrive at the end of a week. One Thursday afternoon, in the last days of May, Rupert drove over to meet her at Nenagh station, on the same great side-car which had fetched him. He had long since identified the car-driver with the butler of the house who figured as coachman on great occasions when the big side-car was ordered out to fetch a person of importance. On such errands he usually took the groom of the stables as a footman to attend to luggage. The groom acted as coachman on less momentous outings when a single horse would do.

The train came in—from Dublin—barely half an hour late, and Addie appeared with Élise in attendance, and lots and lots of luggage, the bulk of which rather added to the good opinion guards, porters, and ticket-collectors had promptly formed of her. Several of these railway servants at Nenagh station claimed old acquaintance of her girlhood's

days, a claim she willingly acknowledged. One or two English travellers in the Limerick express at length put their heads out of window, and asked impatiently 'if this train was ever going on?'—a request for information which the railway staff ignored. However, the train at last puffed its way out of the station, the local staff returned to the issue and inspection of tickets, the overhauling of trucks and freight, the sorting of newspapers; and Addie climbed delighted to her seat on the side-car. The luggage was hoisted by willing arms belonging to smiling faces. Rupert's tips were generous in the extreme; and, as they drove away to a green, green country, in its full May beauty, through a rather gay-looking, untidy little town, with his dear wife by his side, he thought Ireland a most misjudged island.

CHAPTER IV

HERBRAND AND CLARIBEL

From Major the Honble. Herbrand Parkyns, D.S.O., to his brother, Lord Nenagh

'The Cavalry Club, S.W.,
'1*st October* 1901.

'DEAR NENAGH,—On this solemn occasion I won't begin my letter as usual, dear Ninnie. Congratulate me! I 'm engaged to be married and to a girl who 's heaps and heaps of money. So when we 're married I shall try to get out of debt to you and Rupert, and every one else I 've borrowed from in the past. Who can live in these times on seven hundred a year, which is *all* I get, with father's allowance of three hundred a year and my army pay since I 've been back? She 's American . . . Irita Stodgins. Bad surname, but we 'll soon change that. Age about twenty-four, awfully well dressed, voice rather nasal, but that can be cured, and almost good-looking. She 's a bit sallow in complexion—too many sweets, I expect. Her father 's some big pot in the Middle States, as they call them. I met her first at the Crompton-Garths' and then later on at the Ponsonbys'. And then she was here for the partridge-shooting at Cridgeley. I expect the Duchess asked her on purpose, hearing I was coming. Last night we had a bit of a dance after dinner and a pretty stiff day round the coverts, and when we were sitting out in one of the conservatories, I asked her to be my wife and she

consented. So I 've come up post haste to-day to buy an engagement ring—old chap, can you lend me fifty or even a hundred?—I 'm awfully hard up and want to do things well; or if you can't, can Rupert? I want to do things well, at any rate till I 'm married. I 'm going back there this evening after I 've got the engagement ring and written the first few letters that matter; you and the Governor and good old Mums —won't she be glad! she always said, You must marry an heiress, Bertie. Well, old boy, So long. I don't see why the engagement should be a long one. We might at any rate be married before Christmas, and come and spend the season with you and Aunt Charlotte at Toomyvara.—Your affectionate brother,

'HERBRAND.'

'Here, Aunt,' said Lord Nenagh at the breakfast table, tossing Bertie's letter to Lady Charlotte. 'You read what naughty Bertie says, and then pass the letter on to Rupert. Rupert can go up to Addie and tell her its contents, and one of you, if you think fit, can tell Clarry when she comes in.'

Aunt Charlotte read the letter quickly, and then passed it on to Rupert with his refilled cup of coffee.

'Well, indeed! I 'm not surprised. I thought Bertie would fall presently to one or other of the girls, out stalking. I only hope she 's got the money he mentions, plenty of it, and all the other things shall be forgiven—if they need forgiving—or forgotten, which is probably what we shall agree to do, about her accent and her complexion, when she has had

one or two babies and he 's settled down. It 'll be fun having 'em here at Christmas.'

Claribel came in at this juncture, looking rather flushed, with hair just a little bit untidy; but she explained that she had been out riding, and had gone rather too far—Aunt Charlotte said, 'Do let 's all try to be punctual at meals, and at everything else. It 's more necessary in Ireland than anywhere else, to prevent the poor country from going to pieces. Clarry, your brother Bertie — though we 'd better begin now calling him "Herbrand"—is engaged to be married.' Clarry said, 'Oh!' but did not seem greatly interested.

'Yes, he 's engaged to marry a Miss Stodgekins or some such name, an American, very rich, but a trifle sallow in complexion.'

Clarry, however, seemed engrossed in her own affairs, and very little interested in those of her brother. Rupert looked at her lovely face, which seemed to flush a deeper pink beyond the glow of health, as she met his glance. She went on, however, eating her breakfast. He got up, as did Lord Nenagh. 'I 'm going up to see if Addie has had her breakfast all right,' he said, 'and then, Clarry, if you 'll meet me we might go out and see your pony's foot.'

'Clarry, girl,' he said, when they were out of hearing in a shrubbery which grew as you walked away into a strip of woodland, with views to the north and west over Lake Derg: 'Clarry, girl, what 's up? I don't want to be prying, but I 've a kind of feeling a

mystery is growing up around you. If your parents were at home, it could be left to them—perhaps, however, you have already told Aunt Charlotte, and you can reply it 's no business of mine ; or you 've told Addie all about it under promise to say nothing to any one else at present. It 's only that I feel you 're far too pretty and too young to have mysteries you cannot share, and that your mother is twelve thousand miles away, and your Aunt p'r'aps too much inclined to take things easily and not interfere with any one, and Addie is at present too much absorbed in her own affairs, and Nenagh too much interested in astronomy —won't you confide in me ? P'r'aps it 's only that you 've been taking lessons in bicycling ?——'

' Rupert,' said Clarry, lifting her face to meet his introspective glance, ' I 'll trust you. I 'm in love, deeply in love, and—and so unhappy at times, afraid it will never come to any good. . . .'

' Well, who is it ? It can't be the local clergyman, because he is comfortably married, elderly and very plain——'

' Don't chaff me : I 'm unhappy, or I shouldn't have confessed.—It—it—it 's the engineer in the new waterworks at the head of Droughty Valley. . . . We began riding together when I came back here in the spring. . . . He 's so nice—you can't think —only, of course, he 's of no particular family and he has no money, beyond his miserable salary——'

And here Clarry frankly dissolved in tears, beyond further argument.

' Well, at any rate, confession straightaway saves

some trouble,' said Rupert. 'At the same time, dear, don't you think you are letting yourself go rather cheaply? Do you realize how very good-looking you are? Has nobody told you? Have you no ambition? With a face and figure like yours you might go far—Then you are of good birth—that still ranks in the world's estimation—What 's the engineer's name?——'

'Clarence—it was partly that that drew us together, I being Claribel. Clarence Simmons. . . .'

'Ah! Rather a falling-off in the surname—Where does he come from?'

'D—Dublin. I think he was born in Dublin——'

'Well, now, look here. We don't want to be tragic about this. I don't want tragedy ever to touch you. Let 's talk it over quietly. Now, I told the world I was coming out to see your pony's foot, so we 'll go along and look at it, though I expect it 's as right as rain. The worst of family affairs is that one 's got to lie and *lie*, quite harmlessly, to keep people from pricking up their ears.'

So they walked back, looked at the cob or pony, then ascended to a higher path, passed through the wood and out into the pleasant fields, Clarry—at first spasmodically, and then in a calmer way—extolling the good looks and the capabilities of her engineer, and Rupert now and then intercalating a prudent or a critical remark. At last they reached a newly-installed timber seat at the edge of a culminating view over green, rather abrupt, grass-grown hills. Here they sat. Rupert asked permission to smoke—

you still did so to a female companion in 1901. Clarry assented, then remained silent, introspective, taking little heed of the all-too-familiar landscape spreading before her. Rupert felt it might seem a little uninterested on his part if he commented on the beauty of the view, the absolute perfection of the spring vegetation. A healthy-looking but down-at-heel, untidily-dressed countrywoman ascended the path from below, perfectly indifferent to the fact that she was trespassing on a private domain. She greeted them with lavish and verbose courtesy, her attention for the moment arrested by the exceeding good looks of the young lady, and the obvious assumption in her mind that these were a pair of lovers. She passed on discreetly towards the distant house, evidently going there to narrate her misfortunes and beg for food.

Then Rupert began again his prudent admonitions, interspersed with alluring hints at what might be Clarry's future if she did not sell herself too cheaply. His frank expatiation on her good looks cheered her, drove away any further inclination to sob or to describe too fully Clarence's facial charm or his skill as an engineer.

'Well,' said Rupert at last, 'we have expatiated long enough. If they think about us at all at the house, they will think the pony must be very bad as the result of my treatment. Let 's go back, and say nothing to anybody about anything. All I would ask, would advise, is for you to say nothing to any one else—except, it may be, to Clarence—about what

you have told me. And as to Clarence—or Simmons, as I had better call him for the present — my advice—if you will take it—is to go slow. Don't be in a hurry. You have still lots of years in which to dally. Keep him for twelve months, at any rate, under observation, and watch during that time how he gets on. During this autumn, if I were you, I should go to London, to England, and have a good time with one or two of your relations. See the larger world and whether a higher position in it than Simmons's wife does not tempt you or seem obtainable. If by the end of that time Simmons gets on and appeals to you as much as he does now, and if during the year from kindly observation I notice and approve of him, I will help you all I can, my dear little sister, to marry him.'

Clarry impulsively turned her face towards him and kissed his cheek. Then they rose and made their way back through tufts and swaths of heather fading in its blossom, through dwarf gorse blazing with yellow on either side of the path, through harebells and hawkbit, till they reached the woods, and then along a peaty path under the shade of foliage till they attained the garden and the house.

Ten days afterwards, Herbrand, his American fiancée, and her governess-companion arrived, in answer to a warm-hearted invitation from Aunt Charlotte. The American girl—frankly—was not being married for her looks, which were disappointing. She had a pair of beautiful eyes, but a colour-

less complexion; and her teeth, which to-day would have been perfect, *made* perfect, before she was ever shown to the world, were not—twenty-three years ago—in that happy condition of immaculateness: some were good, some were bad, with premature decay, encouraged no doubt by over-indulgence in sweetmeats. But there was something about her which appealed to the sympathies of kind-hearted people like Aunt Charlotte and Rupert—a sense of loneliness, of a lost little creature thousands of miles away from home. Her mother—they gathered—was long since dead; her father, immensely wealthy, was filled with other interests, and if he had any affections, bestowed them elsewhere. For the glory of his name, he had already endowed her with considerable wealth, equivalent to some £50,000, and had cabled his approval of Herbrand's proposal, quite satisfied that Irita—which he pronounced Aïraïta and diminished in conversation to Raïta—should marry into the British aristocracy. When cabling his consent to the match, he had added the gratifying intimation that on her marriage Irita would receive another 250,000 dollars, and that he would write further instructions to the governess-companion.

'Then why protract the engagement?' said Nenagh. 'Why not get married as soon as possible? Let the marriage take place *here*, with old Crathie to marry you, and a wandering bishop—if we can find one—to preside or assist—whatever they like to call it—and you couldn't have a prettier bridesmaid than Clarry. Then, after your little honeymoon

—in weather like this, you won't want *many* days of *that*—come back here and have a good, quiet time before you decide where to settle down. There 'll be lots of rough shooting for Bertie, who 's never happy unless he 's killing something—the remains of father's pheasants and, I believe, the last of mother's peafowl have taken to the woods—so Sergeant Crommelin tells me—by the way, he 's doin' wonders with the Devil's Bit Farm. . . .' And so it was decided. Irita went off with her companion to London and bought many things, many more things, even, than she would want in her married life. Herbrand shot, with the attendance of the dispirited gamekeeper, who was downhearted because his lordship, the son and heir, had just let the estate go to pieces as a game-preserve.

In the middle of November, Irita and Miss Morgentreu came back, with many boxes of costumes. The marriage took place; and she departed with her husband to spend a fortnight's honeymoon in Dublin, feeling for the time more miserable than she had ever felt before, frightened, uncomprehending, utterly alone, without a friend in the world, her husband a complete stranger to her, and making no effort to find any community of thought. Her governess-companion, a rather dried-up American of German parentage, for whom she had felt a timid affection, had been paid off with a year's salary in advance, and was starting to return to the United States. Herbrand, though he scarcely acknowledged the discovery to himself, had already found her a bore, and noticed her bad teeth

with dim resentment, though he appreciated the fact that the use of at least half her £100,000 would make life to him considerably more alluring.

Therefore Irita had a rather trembling upper lip when she entered with her husband the great hall of classical columns and rather threadbare carpets at Toomyvara House.

Aunt Charlotte's kind eyes and rich, motherly accent reassured her, as did the looks of her scarcely realized brother-in-law, Rupert. With Clarry she fell immediately in love. Lord Nenagh—what a thing to have a brother-in-law who was already a lord !—inspired her with a sentimental respect. Herbrand, who had at once checked her from calling him ' Herby,' had told her that his eldest brother was something of a fool, with his head always in the stars, but Irita had already learnt at her American school a deep respect for astronomy. So in a few minutes her reception by Herbrand's brothers and sister changed all her outlook on life ; and as she followed Aunt Charlotte along the corridors to her suite of rooms she felt surprisingly happy.

Addie did not appear till lunch-time. Her condition of approaching motherhood was veiled, even twenty-three years ago, by a waistless upper garment which hung straight from the bust to a fringe of lace round her feet. Her shapelessness a little masked her beauty to critical observers ; at any rate she lacked the supreme good looks of Clarry, and she had a greater reserve of manner which at first seemed to stand as a slight screen of her affections towards the

sensitive Irita. But she had—what already appeared to her sister-in-law—the feature of all this family save Herbrand—kind eyes—and the reassured Irita sat down to lunch, looking almost pretty, with a flush of happiness colouring her thin, sallow cheeks, her brown eyes with a sparkle Herbrand had hitherto missed, and with a flow of excited conversation no longer held in check by a dread of being laughed at for her accent or her unfamiliar expressions. In fact, Aunt Charlotte paved the way for an understanding.

'My dear,' she said, 'do not say a word about your accent, or apologize for anything of the kind. From an English point of view, we are *all* accented here. They tell me when I appear in the other island that I speak with a strong Irish accent. Nenagh (by the bye, you must not call him "Ninnie," like your husband does: it makes him cross), Nenagh, they say, talks like an Ulsterman. Rupert speaks like an Australian, an exaggerated Cockney Londoner; Clarry talks like a schoolgirl; and Addie is nearly as Australian as her husband. As long as we understand one another: that is the main question. And as there are several millions more speaking English in America than there are people talking it in the Old World, I suppose they have got a right to lay down the law as to how it should be pronounced. Now you must have another cutlet, because you have had a long journey and you want feeding up. No, I insist. I shall be offended if you don't.'

Then easy-going laughter and a tendency towards

tearful eyes on Irita's part at the stimulation of this kindness.

And after luncheon even Herbrand seemed more attentive and sympathetic, inspired by the attitude of his family towards his bride. Her maid, by the bye, was a stiff and primly-spoken Englishwoman, secured by her governess after Irita's engagement. The maid was already high-sniffing in her contempt for things Irish, and was blunting the sympathy of the warm-hearted, untidily-dressed domestics in the servants' quarters.

CHAPTER V

RUPERT SEES IRELAND

HERBRAND thought it an excellent plan that his wife should stay through the following spring at his family's home in Ireland. He made no effort whatever to contribute to the household-keeping expenses, and Aunt Charlotte, relying on Rupert's advice, abstained from a hint in that direction. 'I 'm going over to London in a few days to look out for a home for Addie and myself. Let him at any rate stay—it 's really his wife I 'm thinking of—till after we 've gone, then push him out—I 'm afraid he 's a selfish beast——'

'Indeed, and you 're right, Rupert. . . . I always told Christy what it would lead to, her constant spoiling of him. But this I *do* feel—We 've at any rate prevented his wife from breaking her heart, as she seemed like to do, being a foreigner so to speak——'

So the newly-married couple stayed on. Herbrand, after depleting the wild life of bird and beast on the large Toomyvara estate, had grown thoroughly bored by March 1902, and had drifted away to Dublin and after that to London, where he was supposed to be deciding on their future home.

In the preceding December, Addie had given birth to her first child. It was a boy, which in those days, before the granting of female suffrage, inspired her and her husband with great satisfaction. She insisted on calling it 'Rupert,' because her own father's first name was Joseph.

Long before this event, Rupert had invited Clarence Simmons to an interview. He admitted, to himself, that he was a very good-looking young man, Irish born, but with an infusion of caution and reserve in his statements which suggested an English or a Scottish ancestry.

'I thought I should like to see you as soon as possible,' Rupert had said, 'when Lady Claribel told me of your falling in love with her. Her father and mother, as you understand, are away in Australia for several years yet. Her elder brother is the proper person in their place to stand out as her champion and adviser; but Lord Nenagh, *being* Lord Nenagh and somewhat untravelled, might perhaps prove a little summary in his treatment of you, seeing that you have nothing except yourself to offer to his sister, and that his sister promises to be one of the best-looking women of her day. So she has placed the whole matter in my hands, and is willing to follow my advice. I was born in England, and I belong, as you do, to the middle class. But I have made my money in Australia, so I am able to look at things without class prejudice. Well, now, I will be quite frank. I like your appearance and your manners; but if you have no more than that to offer my sister-in-law—it sounds brutal to say so, but we *must* be outspoken—I shall advise her to look out for some one else with much more money, an equally good physique—and that counts, doesn't it?—and a higher position, so that if he is still only a Mister there will be more hope of his winning a knighthood, a baronetcy,

or a peerage. You realize—don't you?—that Lady Claribel is the daughter of an Earl, who holds the premier Governorship in Australia. The Earl is what is called a statesman. He would, with his previous training and disposition, be horrified at the thought of his prettiest daughter marrying an untitled man who was not extremely rich. I, as an Australian by adoption, who has made his money out of sheer luck in Australian mines, view the thing somewhat differently. But after all, I am not the girl's father or elder brother. I am already immensely fond of her, and do not want her to throw herself away. So there you are, my friend. You must keep yourself quiet for at least a year, and see what you can do in that time to better your position. I will take stock of you at the end of the year, and perhaps advise my sister-in-law what she should do: accept or reject you, or offer you a further term of waiting and indecision on her part. I might offer you pity for the immediate hurt to your feelings, but it would be cheap. If you are a real man, this check ought to spur you on to making great efforts; and even then, if at the end of that you cannot marry an Earl's daughter, you might be able to offer marriage to a parson's or a solicitor's. I shall keep an eye on you meantime, whether you realize it or not. Good-bye for the present. Lady Claribel is going to London.'

As soon as Addie was recovered from her confinement, she was absorbed in all matters, great and small, connected with her offspring — the choice

of his godparents, his baptism, his baby-linen, the question of his nutrition. Suckling—'nursing her baby'—would withdraw her from 'Society,' it is true; but it would be more natural and wholesome, and after all, Rupert seemed to prefer at present the quiet life in Ireland. So she gave herself up to the care of her child at Toomyvara.

And Rupert, now that the veil of mourning was being lifted off the British peoples, and politics were regaining their edge and clamour, was applying himself first of all in the autumn-winter of 1901-1902 to study Irish politics, seeing how far he sympathized with the national views of Ireland, and whether he could stand and be elected as a Home Ruler. The toughest part of the problem, he realized, was in Ulster, and he devoted the inside of most of the weeks which concluded 1901 to journeying to Belfast, Londonderry, Enniskillen, Armagh, and other Ulster towns. Nenagh had given him several potent letters of introduction, which secured almost more hospitality than he wanted in families of great personal charm, but views that were too decidedly those of England or Scotland on the Irish connection.

As, for instance, when he visited the Scudamores at Garryvogan. Lord Scudamore met him at the station, Ballyraglan, ten miles away from his house. He did not usually pay such attention to guests, but the fame of Rupert was already spreading in exaggerated terms about the upper crust of Ireland. He was an enormously wealthy young Australian, discovered pots and pots and *pots* of money in Australian mines,

somewhere in the interior of Queensland ; came nevertheless of quite a decent, really old English family at Winchester ; and had married Tipperary's good-looking daughter : was now seeking to settle down in Ireland : ought to be encouraged. So he was met in a handsome turn-out, a kind of smart adaptation of the Irish jaunting-car, a pair of spanking fine horses driven by his Lordship himself, with an English coachman by his side.

Rupert bowled away in this handsome, comfortable conveyance through ten miles of picturesque moorland, which had a certain desolate grandeur of dark December about it : well-made roads—better than those further south—running generally by the side of foaming streams or narrow, silvery lochs.

'Surprised, I expect, we 've not got a station close to our place ? ' said his Lordship, ushering Rupert into the car. 'Really can't tell you why. The dad didn't seem to care much about it in earlier days, and lived a good deal more in England—Parliament, don't you know. I only succeeded him three years ago, and began to take an interest in Ireland. The Midland Company has already taken over these Ulster railroads, and by next year they hope to carry a line through to where we live.'

The Scudamores' house had been doubled in recent times and a good deal modernized in comfort and conveniences. Its appearance rather grated on the eye, because the main structure was sham Gothic, originating somewhere about 1840. Close by, in the great gardens, which were really beautiful in the spring and summer,

was a gaunt, ivy-hung tower of rough masonry, a vestige of the original Irish castle-stronghold which somewhere about James I.'s reign had been taken from an escheated Irish chieftain, a traitor earl, and conferred with the many attendant acres on a Scottish loyalist.

At Castle Scudamore Rupert had a fine time, though he felt a little doubtful as to whether he was really visiting Ireland and getting to understand Irish politics. The Scudamores had little or no religion about them, but were officially Orange Protestants; and their vicar in the parish, which consisted chiefly of the Castle and the many cottages here and there of the estate people, was a true-blue Englishman in his outlook. Though he bore the Irish name of Barry, he boasted of his English University education, of his uncle having been a famous admiral, and this, that, and the other female relation having married into the Peerage. Two of his brothers, moreover, had developed into famous Imperialists, who had brought this, that, or the other island or territory under the British Crown. He came up very often to dinner or lunch, to afternoon tea, and joined shooting parties.

Though the month was December, it was in one of those deceptive, spring-like Decembers so often visiting northern and western Ireland. There was a surcease of rain, and the House party was out day after day, shooting, sight-seeing, visiting the prosperous little towns and one or two snug manufactories which were held up to exhibit the prosperity and political wisdom of Ulster.

'There 's nothing slipshod about *us*,' his host would say. 'Look at our farmers and their men, our townspeople and the factory hands. All hard-working, upstanding, neatly dressed, all wearing boots and shoes, at any rate after they have passed childhood. *They 're* contented, if you like. Return a Conservative to Parliament at Westminster, and are proud to be British citizens. You have no idea of the numbers we contribute to the Navy—and the Army too. Ulstermen are born fighters, but they prefer to fight on the side of the Admiralty. Now before you go south again I will take you over into Donegal. You will see a different sight there. Ramshackle villages, properties going to waste, an Irish-lookin' people, sick-lookin' and worn out with some drug or other, shockin' cottages, and besotted Catholics, or even belongin' to some older religion—believe in fairies, banshees, leprechauns. *I* don' know. But it serves to show the difference between Ulster and the rest.'

It did, though Rupert was not sure that the difference solved the Irish question.

Then, with zigzags backwards and forwards to Toomyvara, to see his wife and her growing infant, he found himself in Dublin in the spring of 1902.

Wishing to be unfettered and unprejudiced in any conclusions he might form, he did not seek out private hospitality, but went first to an hotel. The name of the hotel and its situation were attractive. But the effects of the first night, when his bed had swarmed with hungry fleas, disturbed him, and he shifted to

the Shelburne, too historic a hostelry to be mentioned in disguise. Here he was lodged in as comfortable, stately, and well furnished an apartment as he could have found in many a private mansion. But even the Shelburne, with its well-trained orchestra, its well-cooked meals, was not entirely without a flea.

However, Dublin in the sunny spring of 1902, when the British world was recovering from the assumed dejection for Queen Victoria's death and awaking to the hearty good-humour brought in by King Edward, Dublin seemed a delectable resort, more like some city on the Continent than a British town.

Here, in the sunshine of May, Addie joined him with nurse and baby. Motors were beginning to appear in the street, and there were one or two on hire which took them tremulous but delicious drives, ten miles out in this, that, or the other direction. There were professors of world-wide reputation at the University and the hospitals, at the truly beautiful Botanical Gardens and the dainty Zoological Gardens of Phoenix Park. George Wyndham had become Irish Secretary in the Conservative Government. He was a genial person, married to a lady of high degree, good-looking, and prepared to consider anything or everything in politics or religion, provided you agreed to work under Arthur Balfour and his associates. You could be as Liberal as you liked, if you would only let the Conservative Party put forward your ideas under a veil of Conservatism.

In Dublin Rupert again saw Clarence Simmons.

'I am awfully unhappy,' said the young man. 'I

am afraid Lady Claribel is getting quite outside my orbit. She has almost given up writing to me, and her last letters were full of her parties and successes, and the attentions people showed her.'

'My dear fellow,' said Rupert, 'my advice, if it is any good, is for you to take up an independent line of your own, shut out Claribel from your thoughts and life, and leave Ireland if you can. Why don't you go, as I did, to Australia and try and make your fortune? or, if you think there are better prospects in South Africa, go out there and look for work. Engineers are all to the fore in that country, now that the war is slowly wearing to an end. I should not wonder if this summer brought us peace; and then, you may take it from me, mining developments in the Transvaal will go ahead tremendously; and also in Rhodesia and elsewhere. If you think well of this I will try to get you one or two good introductions. Rhodes is dead, as you know, but I think things will be going better for the British South Africa Company. Think it over during the next few days and let me know if it is to be South Africa or Australia.'

Clarence did think it over, and opted for South Africa, with a preference for middle Zambezia if he could get there. So he was given a letter or two which he was granted leave of absence to present in London. The result was that in the following September, after peace had been established, he was journeying to South Africa on a hundred pounds to pay his ticket and a few weeks' maintenance, the hundred pounds really subscribed by Rupert, when

he realized that Clarence's father and mother could afford to make no such advance.

'I have seen Ireland by now pretty well,' Rupert said to Nenagh, when he and his wife returned to Toomyvara Castle in the following June. 'I have done the North pretty thoroughly, seen a good deal of the East, and had a glimpse of dear, untidy, pretentious, 1860 Cork. I shall always feel that Cork exists mainly in the pages of Irish novelists, and does not realize that we have entered the twentieth century. Addie and I spent a week-end in Killarney, but it didn't agree with Baby, who developed infantile diarrhoea, which is why we hurried back to Toomyvara. But, as I say, I have had a pretty good and comprehensive view of Ireland, and have a completely un-made-up mind as to her future, as to any use I should be if I got elected to represent her in Parliament. I don't think I ever should be elected: I cannot honestly take the extreme views of North or South necessary to excuse Irishmen for electing an Englishman. I want to get into Parliament more than ever. As a Conservative, I think, if Wyndham's policy is going to be the new one, the dominant one. But I must try to find an English constituency, and so I think Addie and I had better make a start for England in the autumn of this year, before we become completely won over by the charms of Toomyvara. I expect, moreover, your father and mother won't stay much longer in Australia, and will want to make their home here.'

'Well, old chap, I shan't strive to detain you by advancing any argument. I didn't think ever to find so satisfactory a brother-in-law, but you must make your own way. Next year or the year after, I too may come to England for astronomical research or other reasons. Besides, there is nothing to prevent your running backwards and forwards to Ireland for a holiday or a rest, is there?'

CHAPTER VI

REGENT'S PARK

THEY arrived in London in the autumn of 1902. So that Addie might recover her strength and nurse her baby, Rupert had left her in her Irish home and himself had undertaken all the work, first of choosing a London residence and then of furnishing and redecorating it. After that he returned to Toomyvara in November and brought her over. It was a solemn business, their arrival: the ten-months-old baby was the main object of anxiety, because Addie had, as the sign of an absolutely healthy constitution, recovered her strength and regained her beauty. The Irish nurse, devoted to the baby to an idolatrous degree, as Irish nurses mostly are, was a niece of Sergeant Crommelin, a young widow, whose husband had been killed in the South African War. Her agony of grief had been in a great measure healed by the post of nurse to the baby, and now came the additional excitement and fierce joy of her first visit to London.

They drove from Paddington in the new brougham which Rupert had bought, and which Robert the all-accomplished—coachman, valet, butler—was to drive. His pleasant face was dimpled with grins of enjoyment, because the railway party included his wife Élise and their child, who travelled from the station in a four-wheeler piled with luggage. Élise was to be Addie's maid in London, and to live with her husband and child in the back premises of Sussex

House, over the stable and the other almost rural appendages to the establishment, looking out westward over a pleasant, country-like, foliaged lane, much frequented in the dusky hours by potential burglars looking for weak spots in the approaches to the establishment. Rupert, however, as they drove into the road which lay between the front of the house and Regent's Park, told Addie that he was fully aware of their possible existence, and in all his repairs and additions had, he believed, baulked them at every turn.

'But, my dear,' exclaimed Addie, as the brougham drew up, 'what a delightful spot! I could not have believed such a site could have existed in the London of to-day. There is just a low fence in front of the house, and then a long strip of beautiful mown grass, and a lake or winding river, and beyond that trees —is it an island? And beyond the trees the Park, stretching ever so far. *How* did you find it?'

'Oh, by ferreting about. Ever since I returned I have always had the notion that there were places like this to be acquired still on the outskirts of Regent's Park; but I will tell you all about that when we are in and settled down, and have got over all the excitement of arrival.'

Inside the house, Addie's enthusiasm mounted. 'And how did you get it all done in the time? Why, you only came to London in August, and in two months all this has been accomplished; for I cannot imagine you found the house in this perfect state when you took it?'

He gave her very little explanation then, being essentially practical. There was first of all Baby to be escorted to his nursery, and this, that, and the other thing explained to his Irish nurse. There was Addie to be shown her bedroom. Whoops of delight, save that her voice was always musical. He felt himself amply rewarded for the strenuous toil and concentrated thought of the last two months. They had finished lunch, and Addie had expressed her complete contentment with the cook's achievements. Robert, with a face controlled to express nothing beyond the orthodox cares of a butler, had been waiting, and now had withdrawn to leave them with their coffee and dessert. Addie's eyes gleamed with pleasure and gratitude.

'You darling!' she said, stretching out her hand to clasp his. 'And to think that you did all this yourself without me to help you! It is a perfectly charming home, and I am so glad it is in London.'

'I am pleased you think that. You know, of course, that we are comfortably off, but in the day of to-day we are really not rich, at any rate at present. I 've been thinking this over quietly for some time, and I decided, instead of trying to keep up a London estab lishment, and in addition a place in the country, and, on top of that, incur all the expenses involved by getting into Parliament, to be content with a London dwelling, and avoid money cares. I like a country life just as you do, but it has seemed to me since I came from Australia as though the pure country of England was fast perishing. Trippers, trippers every-

where, excursions, the multiplication of villas, the dreadful extension of seaside towns. If we want country excursions, as we assuredly shall, let 's make them in Ireland—I hear even the Channel Islands are getting overbuilt — or in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy ; or every now and then a long excursion out to Australia or the United States, or West Indies ; and meantime concentrate all our efforts on making a perfect little home in this old Georgian part of London. This house, I believe, was built a hundred years ago, or nearly so, and was called after the Duke of Sussex, a younger son of George III. It is the most country-like part of London near Charing Cross.

'You know, of course, what I have done. I have bought the house—we got it almost as a bargain because it was rather decrepit—drains wanted attention, water supply required improvement, etc., etc. ; and when I say I have "bought it," I have really only bought a very long Crown lease of it. We shall have to pay a ground rent of £20 a year. But the home will be ours for fifty-odd years. And now that you have had lunch and a good rest, I will take you over every part of it, into every room, even Robert's quarters at the back, where I have made them thoroughly comfortable. The bargain has cost me five thousand pounds, but if we had waited another five years it would have been twenty thousand ; for I cannot imagine now that Regent's Park will ever be built over or given up to factories or prisons.'

'Here 's a letter from Mother,' said Addie, in the

early winter when Rupert had come in to lunch after settling his account with the contractors who had done up, modernized, and decorated their house in Regent's Park. 'Mother writes from Sydney, with such a piece of news! Justina — "Justy" — is going to be married! It has all been very quick. She has become engaged to a very rich Australian, who has recently got into the Sydney Parliament— his name is Henry Brightholm. He has made his money—about £200,000—over sheep. He has got two or three millions of them — sheep, I mean —in the far interior in good seasons. Well, he is going to marry "Justy" pretty soon. We shall have to club together and send her some sort of wedding-present. I expect she has chosen wisely. She is twenty-seven, you know, and there is no time to waste. However, if it comes off all right, I think it will rest Mother's mind, and she will then begin to look forward to her eventual return to England. And now *we* have passed the worry and bother about the Coronation, and have got settled in Sussex House, we can begin to think out *our* career.'

'I hope so,' replied Rupert with an audible sigh. 'But I 'm beginning to feel rather overdone with relations, on my side as well as yours. All the great thinkers and progress-makers in the past must surely have pushed their relatives on one side or been solitary children. I wonder whether Darwin and Huxley, and Faraday and people like that, were members of large families?'

A few mornings after this conversation he frowned

over the reading of his morning letters, and threw one of them across the breakfast-table for Addie to read.

It was from his mother, and she wrote :

'My dear Boy,—Your Father and I are becoming anxious about Janet. She is now nearly thirty. About three years ago her health began to suffer. We think she must have had some love disappointment. Either it was a very nice curate here, who married, very much for money, we fear, in 1900 ; or else it was a young officer at the barracks in Winchester who obtained an introduction to her father and visited us a good deal during the autumn of 1899. But he went out to South Africa at the end of that year and was never heard of again ; or at least Janet never heard of him. I think he was wounded and got over it, and married one of the Society women who went out to South Africa to nurse. But I am getting very anxious about poor Janet, and the doctor here thinks she ought to have a change. She says herself, in rather intemperate language, that she would be better if she could only get away from Peggy. Peggy's Optimism tries her terribly. A year ago Peggy attended a course of lectures given at Winchester, in which we were all advised to be optimistic and to look on the bright side of things, talk and think only about the bright side. I must admit that since then Peggy has grown to be very trying.

'I do not know whether Addie could ask Janet up to London for a stay during the winter ? I think from

a letter she wrote to me last month, just after you had settled down in Regent's Park, that Addie was expecting another baby. Perhaps Janet might be of some use to her in that case.

'I dare say you heard from Francis that his wife has had another child. I wish his income was larger, and that if his wife is to have a number of children he would give up quarrelling with his vicar about High Church practices. I cannot believe in the possibility of any one in Littlehampton having a piece of the True Cross, but he says they got it from Arundel, where it was brought during one of the Crusades.

'Dorothy writes enthusiastically of paying you a visit later on in the spring. Ardney is getting on well, but your Father is a little anxious about his religious faith. He seems to spend Sunday after Sunday careering about the country on one of those new things called a motor bicycle. I wish he could attain an income which would permit him to marry and settle down with some good girl. I should not mind him marrying a farmer's daughter. He has such a sad tendency to admire actresses.

'Meredith finishes with school at Christmas. What on earth we are to do with him then I cannot think. He seems to have no very decided bent. But I am anxious most about Janet.—Your loving Mother,

'Sara Cuthbertson.'

'What are we to do about this?' said Rupert, showing Addie the letter. After reading it, she answered: 'Why — have her up here — Janet, I

mean—give her a good time, from Christmas till February . . . after that, you know, I shall have to give up playing the hostess. . . .'

'You darling!' her husband exclaimed, and the invitation was accordingly sent. Janet appeared by the end of the week, with an air of fitful gaiety about her, dark circles round her eyes, a thin face and a hot hand.

'Well, Janet,' said her sister-in-law as soon as they sat down to tea on the afternoon of her arrival, 'you want a thorough change, a medical overhauling, and something to buck you up. You see the condition in which I am, and realize I must keep very quiet for the next two or three months. But you will be able to *help* me in lots of ways, and at the same time enjoy yourself, I hope. You will be able to go about with Rupert and with your little nephew. Isn't he a perfect darling?' [This was the first child, born at Toomyvara.]

Janet agreed in rather a spasmodic manner. But she felt already, as she expressed it, 'loads better' after leaving her rather dull clerical home, her exasperating younger sister, and the attendance at Cathedral services which had ceased to interest her, or to satisfy her vague longings or aspirations.

Three days afterwards, the specialist in Harley Street, to whom Rupert had taken her, told him there was nothing at present organically wrong; that she was really suffering partly by not being married, partly by not having enough work to do, an injudicious diet, a lack of interest in life. If she could not marry and

become as quickly as possible a mother, she ought to take up some cause which interested her and occupied her attention. Had he been a prophet, he might have added, 'If she can only hold out and keep from generating any mortal malady till the Suffrage agitation comes'—but he was no prophet, and, like most other people in 1902, the subject had not come within his range of practical politics, would not meet with his approval when it did. However, life in Rupert's home and fixing her attention on matters of diet and exercise had begun in a week to work a great improvement in Janet's health and appearance.

Rupert found that an occasional Christmas present or midsummer offering of fifty pounds tempered the religious acerbity of the Rev. Francis. He also made inquiries in Church circles and amongst men of politics who dabbled with Church questions. He got in touch with Members of Parliament who were High Anglicans, and mentioned his brother's hard position at Littlehampton. Early in 1903 the Rev. Francis was offered a change to a vicariate of his own and a new church—'very High'—on the furthest outskirts of a London suburb, which had only recently ceased to be 'out in the country' by an extension of building and habitation that brought it within the limits of the County of London. Here he and Maud established themselves soon after 1903 began, with two children, but with an income to subsist on of £450 a year, that amount being derived from the living. A further £50 a year was to be definitely allowed him by his younger brother till such time as

he received the full £500 income from his clerical stipend.

Addie's new baby—this time a girl—was born in February 1903. After some discussion they gave it the name of Rupert's mother, 'Sara.' Rupert did not care much what it was called, holding that a child, as it grows up, grows into its right name and imposes it on us; but it would gratify his mother to perpetuate her name in a grandchild; and if it were spelt without the final 'h,' it would not seem—in the age of Sara Bernhardt—too aggressively scriptural.

'It 's an awful pity,' said Addie, 'that we feel ourselves obliged to carry on the names of fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers. We ought to think of something entirely original to call our own children.'

The child, however, once named and safely christened, and his wife beginning to look again as pretty as she was when he first proposed—just a trifle more amplified in figure, but looking charming in her new dresses with their long, flounced skirts—Rupert was able to turn away his thoughts from small home questions and decisions to larger issues. He was beginning to get just a wee bit anxious about mining developments in Australia. He had, as he thought, secured his whole life's outlook in finance by carrying away a hundred and twenty thousand pounds from Australia. But a proportion of this amount was represented by shares in the mining enterprise he had organized. These shares three

years before had been quoted at £3, 2s. each. He noticed, however, early in 1903, that they had fallen to a lower level of quotation—just a little over £2. Brokers whom he consulted in the City gave him easy explanations which did not satisfy, nor did correspondence with Australia bring him completely satisfactory answers to his questions. Gold and silver, lead, platinum, and opals were cropping up in other parts of Queensland and New South Wales. Some other forms of ore, of which his own mines had seemed in 1899-1900 to be the sole possessors, were being found elsewhere. All this region of eastern Australia, east, west, and south of the great artesian basin—once a vast, shallow inlet of the northern Pleistocene sea—was obviously thick with mineral wealth, and no one discovery of this or that metal could be deemed to be the only one till the whole of these many thousands of square miles had been ransacked.

Then again, politics threatened to be very expensive. Rupert had been adopted in February 1903 as prospective Conservative candidate for North Marylebone. The seat was already held by a Conservative, but the holder had privately intimated his intention of retiring, from old age, at the next election. Already a Liberal, not to say a Radical—'working man'—opponent had been nominated. West and East Marylebone in those days were both sections of this populous district of West London securely held by Conservatives. North Marylebone had been so much affected in recent times by the erection of huge blocks of working-men's flats and by the growth of a vast

artisan population that its continued Conservatism, even with the vicinity of St. John's Wood and South Hampstead, was considered doubtful.

Just about this time there came over from Australia, and within his ken, Joseph Jolibert, one of his mining company's managers in Australia. Jolibert was Australian born, but descended from a Huguenot family in Ulster. Yet he was entirely 'Ulster' in appearance, without any visible evidence of descent from a French stock. His father had migrated to Australia as a famous chemist, drawn into metallurgy when amazing gold discoveries were being made seventy years ago. His son was like most other North Irish, Protestant types—tall, thick-set, strong men with brown hair, reddish moustache, and grey eyes with small pupils. He was enormously practical and scientific as regards all questions connected with mining, minerals and metallurgy, and mechanical contrivances, but, like most Australians, he seemed physically incapable of ever learning French or of directing his tongue and lips and uvula to the right pronunciation of French words. The fact that he was endowed with a French name had become a positive affliction to him: he got over the difficulty by pronouncing it as if it were written 'Jolly-burt.' Though in most subjects shrewd and calm and silent, he was ridiculously nervous about being mistaken for a refugee or the son of a refugee from New Caledonia. He had long ago in Australia expressed privately to Rupert the wish that all such refugees from the French penal settlement could be executed the moment they landed on the Australian continent.

Janet was still staying on at Sussex House, though Addie had retired to her charming bedroom and undergone her confinement. She—Janet—had so improved in health and looks, become so mellowed in disposition by her new outlook, so thankful for freedom of mind and not being pressed to go to church every Sunday morning or on any week-day, that she had not been sent home prior to the birth of little Sara. So she played hostess in Addie's absence, and thus met Joseph Jolibert. He was almost frightened at the daring thought of proposing marriage to her, so high had Rupert ascended in his mind by his success, his money, his English pronunciation, and his marriage. Rupert, however—more far-seeing and intuitive than the generality — soon took in the situation and approved of it. He asked Jolibert to stay at Sussex House, so that they might discuss their mining business intimately.

'Aren't you a Freemason?' he asked Rupert as they were standing near the Botanic Gardens gate. 'But of course you are not, or you would have answered my signals long ago. Why aren't you?'

'Why should I be, my dear man? I don't seem drawn to that sort of thing in the very least. I am not very sociable, I suppose, and Freemasonry seems to involve so much dining or lunching and being so much concerned in other people's affairs. I dare say in that direction it may have a lot of right on its side. I am too much interested in my own affairs only and those of my wife; but nevertheless we seem to abound

on both sides with relations, entangling us in all their business, wearying us with their differences of opinion, their want of money, their religious faith, or something or other else about them. I have to attend because I feel it is my duty ; but it is damned inconvenient when I want to concentrate my attention on mining companies, political questions, my children's or my servants' health troubles. However, that is all part of my private affairs, and I cannot for the life of me see why I am compelled to be interested in people's troubles or joys when they are not related to me. Of course, if it could be shown conclusively that I had not got six brothers and sisters and my wife seven, if we had not got uncles and aunts on both sides, it might be different. And then all the *time* that is wasted in this respect on sheer foolery—eighteenth-century imitations of antiquated and magical rites which have descended from the early Middle Ages, and all the rubbish about Ishbosheth and a quite unreal Solomon, after two or three centuries of silence and forgetfulness. No, I am too avaricious about my time. If you want anything to occupy *your* vacant mind, why don't you take up *palaeontology* ? That 's what licks me. I meet hundreds of men like yourself, with keen minds and discriminating outlook. But you are quite contented as regards the past to have it sketched out for you in Genesis, that is to say, by the traditions of Jewish writers, who began to write about two thousand five hundred years ago. . . . It is all part of the general faultiness of our modern education. . . . I don't

suppose you ever learnt any palaeontology at school or college, any zoology worth speaking of, or botany, any truly-compiled ancient history. . . . I know I had to make *my* education modern after I left Rugby. . . .

'However, unless we go on to the City now we shall be late for the meeting, and your brains will be good enough there, though you don't know much that is scientific about metallurgy.'

Well, the outcome was that Jolibert took Janet one afternoon to see the first burst of spring beauty in the Royal Botanic Gardens — or he may have taken her to see the kangaroo he had brought home and presented to the Zoological Gardens. But in one or other place, after they had had a very pleasant tea, he stammeringly made his proposal; and Janet, after curbing her perturbation and looking to right and left to see there was no listener, accepted him. Rupert took him down to Winchester to introduce him to his parents; and the old Canon, relying on his son's report, accepted Jolibert as a son-in-law. The marriage took place in the very rainy June of 1903 at Winchester, and very soon afterwards, to avoid the appalling heat of the Red Sea in July and August, they embarked for Australia, and only slightly enter this story again.

Janet's younger sister, Peggy, emerged in 1904 as a full-toned Optimist. In the two preceding years at Winchester, she had attended some public lectures on taking a bright view of things. The lecturer— Frances Japes — was an attractive-looking, experi-

enced woman, who in the following years became noteworthy as a Suffrage struggler and exponent. But at the opening of the twentieth century, Miss Japes had not got further in her outlook than generalized optimism. She was of good appearance, good health, not quite thirty, had had two concealed love disappointments, and a first-rate education at Newnham. She was of good middle-class family, with a head-shaking, anxious, but not interfering clerical father. Of these details we know but little, but she came under the world's notice in 1903 as a clever lecturer, wielding a remarkable influence over people of her own sex.

So she enrolled Peggy as an Optimist. She realized Peggy's difficulties—snobbish, short-sighted mother, always uneasy about the Swears origin, and desirous of social advancement along the right lines.

Peggy was not ill-looking, by any means, but after the age of eighteen to nineteen had given up the thought of acquiring a husband at Winchester. She was not rich or fashionable enough to attract an ill-paid military officer. She would have scorned to marry any one connected with trade, partly, no doubt, because no one connected with trade had made her an offer. No: she must devote herself to humanity, and in connection with Miss Japes and her friends instilled into all who would listen the virtues of Optimism. Unconsciously she was a forerunner of Monsieur Coué; but the Suffrage struggle entirely eliminated all the nonsense about trade disqualifications in a marriage union.

CHAPTER VII

DOROTHY, STEPHEN, AND THE WORBARROWS

'RITA is going to have a baby, Rupert,' said Addie one morning when she opened her letters at breakfast in the pleasant, sunlit breakfast-room in Sussex House.

'Well, I thought as much last time I saw her. However, that condition may set her all right with Bertie and with herself. When does she expect it?'

'She talks about June or July, and it is now April. Meantime, if you have got an opportunity, you might say a word to Bertie about his treatment of her. He might show her more attention, take better care of her, and not be so eager to be out and about enjoying himself.'

'I will see if I get a chance. He doesn't treat the poor little woman any too well. Still, I am very glad she is going to be a mother.'

But at the end of May there was a disaster of some kind. Irita, nettled by Herbrand's frequent absences, thought she ought to go out and about with him, so she pressed her claim to attend an archery meeting at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Regent's Park. Rather grumblingly he took her, saying her request was a bit of damned foolishness, and it wasn't decent when women were far gone in pregnancy to trot about and show themselves. At the archery meeting she somehow bungled, got between the archers and their target, was hurried and scurried off the range by

indignant, portly officials. Her foot tripped over a hidden obstacle and she fell. Then after she had been helped up and assisted off the ground by a keeper of the Gardens, moved to sudden pity as he saw the look of agony whitening her face, she was put into a four-wheeled cab by the indignant Herbrand, who had to accompany her home to Berkeley Square. And here his angry remonstrances were suddenly hushed by her fainting. This episode encouraged her women servants to speak and advise, and the husband next went out to summon the doctor. That evening she gave birth to a premature child, born at a little more than seven months. She was hardly aware of its existence for five days, during which she unconsciously battled against the clutch of death. But as she began to recover her senses she was seized with a passionate affection for the poor little mite, and set her teeth with a determination to do all that might be done through money and medical skill to make it live and to become in time a perfect child.

To Herbrand, however, a glance or two at the unfinished infant killed any sense of fatherliness. He felt somehow humiliated at his parentage in this little monster, which reminded him more of things he had seen in bottles during a half-farcical visit to the Museum of the College of Surgeons with an Army pal.

'Bertie,' said Addie, with a hard look in her eyes, and with compressed lips when she was not speaking, 'you just ought to be jolly well *ashamed* of yourself.

For my part, I cast you off, unless from this very moment you repent and make amends. You take advantage of this poor American girl, knowing nothing of English conditions, you entrap her into a marriage, live idly and gloriously on half her income; then, when she has this premature delivery, you do nothing to help her to bear the sorrow and disappointment. Get out of my sight and don't come here again till Rita is once more happy and asks me—begs me—to forgive you.'

Herbrand departed in sulks, not to re-enter Sussex House for something like eight years. Irita devoted herself almost fanatically to the unfinished child, but only succeeded in keeping it alive till it had reached the limit of pre-natal age.

'We are going to have quite a novelty to see us next week, my dearest,' said Rupert, coming into his wife's writing-room just before lunch. She had called it 'writing-room' from the moment of furnishing it in the new house, disliking out-of-date terms like 'boudoir' or 'sulkery' brought into existence in the eighteenth century. Addie was not a very scholastic person, and was too much absorbed in her children to spend any more time than was necessary in the use of her pen. Still, this quiet little sitting-room, her very own, was chiefly used by her as a room to write in, so she named it accordingly.

'Some one coming to see us next week?' she asked her husband, looking up from a letter she was inditing to the Army and Navy Stores.

'She is my sister Dorothea, or Dorothy, as I once used to call her—I forget how the name stands to-day —Dorothy Manders. She married in 1899, before we did, and I personally cannot have seen her since she was a little girl, some thirteen or fourteen years ago. She married an Oxford man. I think he was once a master at Winchester College, and had to leave Winchester because he could not believe in God, or some religious trouble of that kind; and you know Winchester in its orthodoxy has scarcely moved beyond the sixteenth century. However, his writings, as I think even *you* know——'

'"Even I"?—Well, I suppose you are right. I have a great respect for Science and a great interest in its discoveries, but, *oh*, so little time!'

'I *know*. I am certainly not reproaching you, perfect mother and housekeeper as you show yourself to be, but I only put it that way because Manders, my brother-in-law, whom I do not think I have ever seen in the flesh, is a really remarkable scientific writer. However, every moment I expect to hear the luncheon gong, and must not be too diffuse. They are coming at last to see us, next week. I am really interested and pleased to have him here to take cognizance of. As to Dorothy, she is almost a complete stranger, for I do not remember taking much interest in her when she was a schoolgirl.'

They arrived the next week from where they lived in Oxfordshire. It was the then unadmitted London autumn season of 1903. Dorothy or Dorothea—she had two children, and was of a serious turn of mind, so

began to favour the Greek form of her name in preference to the English abbreviation—was rather more like Rupert in the face than was either of his other sisters—rather serious-looking, a little lacking in humour; otherwise she was still nearly 'good-looking.' The anxiety that showed itself in her dark eyes, her pursed lips, and her intellectual face, was compact of intense regard for her husband and care over his health; concern that her two boys should grow up healthy, hygienic, and morally good, without religious faith to repose on; anxiety that her husband should make enough money by writing to provide a sufficient income to live on respectably in a charming part of Oxfordshire, to clothe and educate his children, and yet at the same time that he should not over-agitate himself, over-work: all these considerations made her outlook serious. She lacked the precious assistance of seeing the humour in life.

At the moment of arrival her thoughts were concentrated on the enumeration and identification of their pieces of luggage. The two boys were being safely looked after by a conscientious nurse, and she had come up alone with Stephen—for, of course, her husband was named Stephen; there is a kind of unescapable quality about that name which makes it positively inevitable when parents think they have procreated an intellectual baby.

But Rupert's welcome was so hearty, his interest in his brother-in-law was so real, that Dorothea's anxious face brightened with a charming smile, and she took to her sister-in-law at once.

'Now what name am I to call you by after thirteen years?' cried her brother. 'You may prefer "Dorothea," but life is too short for four syllables. "Dor" is too flippant, "Dolly," I suppose, too childish. I think, after all, it had better be Dorothy?'

'It shall be anything you like, dear boy. I never remember thinking very much about you thirteen years ago, and I realize all at once you are a person worth knowing.'

An interval for hand-washing and toilet, and the smoothing down of feathers. Then they assembled again for tea in Addie's writing-room.

'I thought you would like your tea here,' said Addie. 'It is more cosy and *intime* than in the drawing-room, and makes it easier for us to say we are out if any one calls inopportunely. Sit down here by the table, and your husband can take the arm-chair opposite Rupert at the fireplace. I thought to-night we would have a quiet little dinner, rather early.—By the bye, are either of you dieted or limited to any particular forms of food?'

'No, I don't think we need bother you about that. We neither of us eat enormously. But we have got rather weary of trying special diets to make ourselves specially clever or concentrated.'

'Well, we have just got a few oysters.—We can depend upon their being quite fresh, because we get them direct from Whitstable.—We have just got a few oysters, some soup, a guinea-fowl, a salad, and a sweet I think you will rather like, and that is

all; because at eight we are going to take you out to see a play. A Mrs. Patrick Campbell is appearing in it—I don't know whether you have seen her. If that meal leaves you hungry you can eat something more when you come back.'

'Heavens! No. Our evening meal at home is of only two courses. When we have finished our tea I want to go up and see your children, and Stephen wants to talk with Rupert about an astronomical discovery attributed to your brother—Lord Nenagh, isn't it? I am always a little timid about pronouncing Irish names. They have so many groups of consonants which are politely passed over in conversation.—Of course, I suppose you say Nená, and not Nenag?'

So they presently separated, and Mrs. Manders went up to the nursery, where she expressed great delight with the two children.

Stephen and Rupert sat talking in the writing-room till it was time to dress for dinner.

'Yes, I should like to know your brother-in-law. I fancy he was a Cambridge man, but he is making quite a stir at Oxford with his discoveries and suppositions regarding Jupiter's satellites. I suppose you know his main discovery, that eclipses of Jupiter's moons occur sixteen minutes earlier when Jupiter and the earth are both on the same side of the sun—sixteen minutes earlier, I mean, than when they are each on *opposite* sides of the sun. This fact, which has also been confirmed by a Danish astronomer, leads us to the conclusion that light

cannot travel instantaneously, but is limited to a rate of about 186,000 miles a second.'

'I think Nenagh did write to me something about Jupiter's satellites, but the fact is that I have been so absorbed in the earth-bound bother of getting a house in London, decorating and furnishing it, attending to its sanitation, keeping off possible burglars by ingenious devices, and at the same time grappling with Australian mining business, that I have had no space left in my intelligence to consider the awful problems of astronomy. You, who are a trained astronomer—are you not?——'

'Well, as far as I am anything, I suppose I am.'

'. . . Well, you who like Nenagh have given up the greater part of your intelligence and energy to the study of things visible through the telescope must be aghast at the littleness of the human mind, at the fact that there are only on the most favourable computation about a thousand human beings in Great Britain who take any note at all of astronomical problems . . . theories, explanations; and if there are a thousand people who give attention to these things in this island, there are perhaps only twenty in Ireland, a hundred in France, another thousand in Germany, about fifteen in the Mediterranean countries, three in educated India, five hundred in the United States, and perhaps another fifteen in all the vast dominions of the British Empire.'

'I agree in the main with what you say. The contrast, the disproportion is staggering. We, for

example, we so-called Christians, have inherited a mass of peddling theology from the Jews of two or three thousand years ago; ideas, explanations, reasons framed without any knowledge of the universe — no other belief behind it all but that the flat plane of the earth was the centre of everything.'

'Yes, as you say, the thought is staggering, almost painfully so, and yet we must now go up and change our clothes and be ready for this specially early dinner. Have you brought your dress clothes, by the bye?'

'I have. I still attend to such mundane details, and as we are—I think you said—going into the stalls to see Mrs. Patrick Campbell, it is positively obligatory to put them on.'

'I only asked you to reassure you in case you had overlooked this detail. I could have lent you a suit —I don't think you are far off my shape and build, a little shorter perhaps, or we could have masked you with some greatcoat and an assumption of delicate health.'

At the theatre they found themselves seated next to the Worbarrows in the same row of stalls. The Worbarrows—or at any rate the distinguished-looking Mrs. Worbarrow—were already known, not only by Lady Adeliza, but by Mr. and Mrs. Manders, who every now and then met them at Oxford. Stephen Manders shared with Mrs. Worbarrow (a rather embittered lady) the same extent of unbelief in the religious tenets of the day: Addie was already

striving—in the bare minute whilst the orchestra stumbled into its overture, and the curtain was preparing to rise on Mrs. Patrick Campbell—to explain to the puzzled Rupert who and what the Worbarrows were, besides being their near neighbours. Then the attention of these six people was absorbed by the play, of which Mrs. Worbarrow was preparing to write a finished and classical critique for the *Spectator*. In the intervals between the acts they had more time for conversation, and as Stephen did not seem tired but elated and uplifted by his visit to London, Addie pressed the Worbarrows, who lived at only two minutes' distance from Sussex House, to drop in on them before going home and nibble a little supper: 'We can finish our discussions there!'

The invitation was accepted, and the Worbarrows did not ply their own latchkey till midnight.

The next morning, over a nine-o'clock breakfast, Addie and her guests exchanged experiences and confirmatory details about their acquaintances of the night before.

'Mrs. Worbarrow,' said Stephen, 'had been, down to the age of thirty, Alethea Mathieson. Her father, you know, was Dean of Droitwich.'

'They were a very good-looking family, I remember,' interrupted Dorothy. 'After Father was made a Canon at Winchester, we somehow got to know them, and I remember feeling so envious of the five girls. I don't think I knew them all at once, but I know there were five of them, because they were all more or less

good-looking, and each one was sufficiently original in her looks, and in the interests she had developed, not to force herself on one's attention as an *obvious* sister of Alethea.'

'One of them, I know,' said Stephen, 'had been devilish good-looking, and she had married a military officer who was killed in the Boer War. But before then she had given birth to three children, who are all likely to become notable.'

'Another sister,' added Dorothy, 'became quite a long time ago a great landscape gardener; and I think she married somebody in a firm of florists. A third girl has developed into quite a noted portrait-painter — miniatures, you know — I don't think she married any one. The fourth sister of Thea Worbarrow was in some ways the prettiest of them all. I went to her wedding, her first wedding, that is. But it turned out unhappy, or else her husband, who was in the Army, was killed in the South African War. At any rate, she has now married again.'

'Won't you try a little of this caviare?' said Addie, who was finding all this discussion of Mrs. Worbarrow and her sisters a little overdone. 'Rupert and I both adore caviare, and he manages to get it specially forwarded to us from the Don river. The Russian who sends it to us thought there was a sturgeon in the rivers of Queensland, and wanted to develop the caviare industry there. I don't know that Rupert could help him, otherwise than to show conclusively that there was *no* sturgeon. The

Russian took a great liking to Rupy, and has arranged to send us this caviare during each season.'

But the caviare was no deterrent to the discussion of Mrs. Worbarrow's relations. The Manderses helped themselves dumbly to caviare, which their sense of taste did not appreciate, and resumed their subject.

'Alethea, whom we saw last night—didn't you notice how her hand shook?—must have been at least thirty at the time she married Selby Worbarrow. Worbarrow, himself, is short and stout, and she is tall and willowy—people ought to have painted pictures of her. Her husband is not what you could call unpleasing, but is on the borderland of eccentric when one sums him up physically. I have always imagined that she did not come to him *entirely* fancy free. She has that tinkling laughter, and a distinctly priggish attitude towards most things. All this gives me the impression that she took him and undertook wedlock at first as a *pis aller*,' resumed Stephen, golloping down without appreciation his last mouthful of toast and caviare.

'When I have sat opposite to her'—he went on—'at dinner parties or next to her at scientific meetings, there has always been a *noli-me-tangere* atmosphere oozing through her well-cut dinner dress. My mental introspection seemed to reveal a deep-down, passionate self, which had needed an enormously strong will to restrain the personality from any *outré* expression.'

'Well, you know,' echoed Dorothy, accepting a

second cup of coffee and some marmalade, 'I have an idea that when she was about twenty-seven she entered on a stage of recklessness at the Deanery —almost, one thought, she was near throwing everything over—I mean, in the way of decorous life—in order to satisfy some phase of intense feeling. I have always thought at that stage she wanted to marry somebody quite different from Selby Worbarrow —I dare say a man who was already pledged in some other direction.'

Rupert had been chafing at this obstinate discussion of a lady who had done no one, as far as he knew, any harm, so at last he said :

'Well, so much for the Worbarrows. Now let 's talk of some one else ; but you have finished your breakfast, and Addie is dying to get away to her children. I am due in the City, and there you are ! —left to yourselves to decide how you are going to spend the morning. But you will find lots to do and lots to see, so I won't suggest any plans.'

And the components of the breakfast party wiped their lips and put down their napkins and blew their noses. Stephen adjusted his tie on rising from the table and looking in the prettily framed glass. Dorothy stroked Addie's Persian cat, and they passed out of the breakfast-room and went their several ways till tea-time.

The Worbarrows were finding themselves drawn within the orbit of the Cuthbertsons by their near neighbourhood. Selby had come into money rather

unexpectedly in middle age, when he had been some fifteen years a Government clerk in a highly respectable Government office. The three or four thousand a year he had inherited from an uncle had enabled him to set up his dwelling on a very nice Regent's Park terrace, three or four doors only away from the detached house of the Cuthbertsons. It was a celebrated terrace, not a very great distance from the Marylebone Road, and several of its occupants in 1904 were persons well known in London, in the United States, and in Paris : very successful novelists who had amassed quite a respectable little fortune by their writings, retired Government clerks, great scientists, or Anglo-Indian officials who had made noteworthy discoveries in the fauna or flora of the Himalayas : Hanover Terrace—there, I have given the secret away.

Either Addie met Alethea in the strip of private garden across the road, which was withdrawn from the public area of Regent's Park and allotted to the tenants of the opposite houses, and thinking she had an interesting face, spoke to her ; or it was the other way about. Each more or less knew who the other was. But in any case, Rupert had not lived many months at Sussex House before all respectable Regent's Park was aware of his existence and his proximity, and his wife, with her charming face and her attractive child—children, was coveted as an acquaintance.

CHAPTER VIII

CLARRY'S MARRIAGE

'HULLO!' exclaimed Rupert one morning, opening his *Times* at the breakfast-table. (This was still covered with a white cloth, and Addie still poured out tea or coffee on the breakfast-table. It was no later than the early part of 1904. The breakfast-room was very cosy, though the weather outside in Regent's Park was bitter, for it was early April. There was a bright fire in the grate, whose flames were reflected here and there in the silver of the table.) 'They have appointed a successor to your father when he comes away this year. What an extraordinary move!' he went on, his eyes scanning a short article in the *Times*.

'Make haste! Don't tantalize me. Who is it?' said Addie, pouring out coffee and milk.

'It is the Duke of Merioneth,' her husband replied. 'He has been the Governor of Bombay for several years, and only came back the other day. They say that he has remained Free Trade, and never been converted by Choselwhit to the opposite policy. I expect he doesn't want to go back to the Ministry, but it 's curious his taking a liking to Australia. His wife is an American, awfully pretty woman. I think she likes "queening it." She has been very popular out in Bombay, and I dare say she will get on even better at Sydney. Wonder what Justina will think of her, and whether they will become friends?'

Addie tendered no definite reply. Having poured

out her coffee, she had turned to her own correspondence, and was absorbed in it, not even having helped herself to bacon, or eggs, or smelts, or whatever there was to eat on this spring morning. Then having absorbed her main news from a letter in Claribel's untidy handwriting, she put it down; but then remembering she had nothing to eat on her plate, and realizing that she was ordered by her doctor to pay great attention to her meals, she rose and went to fill her plate at the sideboard, saying, however, as she passed the munching Rupert: 'I heard all you said, but I have just had such a piece of news from Clarry, that I could think of nothing else.'

Then, having returned with three smelts on a plate, she continued: 'Clarry is engaged to be married—at least so she says, and asks me to tell you. She underlines the *you*. She has accepted a great financier, Sir M. Jacobus. The M., she fears, may stand for Moses, which is rather a pity, but I dare say she will persuade him to discard it for some other name beginning with the same initial. He belongs, however, to the great financial house of Jacobus, Chauvelin & Montressor, which she seems to think you ought to know all about, as it is in the City. At any rate, persons whom she has consulted give it the *highest* financial standing, and she adds *you* ought to know. You can read her letter for yourself; it seems just a little defiant in tone, but that is better than her incurring a financial strain with Clarence What-was-his-name, which I do not think she would ever have stood. And he, I

think you said, went out to South Africa long ago. He has probably forgotten all about Clarry and her charms. I suppose we ought to congratulate Clarry if this Jacobus really has enough money. She says he is only forty-eight, and is quite presentable. He is Cape Dutch in origin, and is a widower; his first wife, who apparently left no children, was a Cape Dutchwoman or a Boeress, and died long ago. Well, there is the letter. Read it, and, like the dear, good creature you are—as Father is not yet back from Australia—*do* put a few questions about Jacobus in the City, and assure yourself that he is absolutely sound, before we endorse the engagement. You will be able to let me know the main results of your inquiry on the telephone. I dare not press you to return to lunch, because when I do so you always say I baulked your making some wonderful bargain, but Clarry is coming to see me in the afternoon. I shall tell the servants to say I am out to every one else, and then she will open her heart—I am afraid it is not a very large one, because I remember her enthusiasm over Clarence Something-or-other, and she seems to have very calmly chucked him since he went out to South Africa. However, telephone the main facts, and I won't in any case express myself very decidedly till you return from the City.'

'I know the name well enough of the firm, and have always understood, so far as anything is safe and certain in South Africa, it stood very high—diamonds, gold, and some other wonderful mineral they have found in the Transvaal—perhaps it is

this new thing, radium. Give me some more coffee —though it is not nice in flavour—coffee never is in England, except at three or four special London restaurants. I am told it is Brazil, and that we ought all to drink this new coffee from Nyasaland, or real Mokha—if we could get it. And now I must be off. I will let you know all I can find out this morning.'

Two hours later his answer was satisfactory. He promised details when he returned in the evening.

Clarry arrived about four o'clock in Aunt Ponsonby's electric motor.

Aunt Ponsonby was a distant relation, not even an aunt, though, being over fifty years of age, she was thus styled by her younger second cousins. She was quite a nice person really, but one of the chief matchmakers in the higher society of London. She did a great deal of good in this way, and appreciably added to her slender widow's income, so that she could in earlier days maintain a carriage and pair, and now an electric motor and chauffeur. There have always been matchmakers since the earliest civilized times in Egypt, and they have generally done a great deal of good. It is an unscientific procedure, because the dear ladies usually know nothing about transmissible forms of disease; still, they are usually actuated by shrewd common sense.

Clarry found Addie writing letters and addressing envelopes in her little sitting-room.

'I am going to buy—or rather, Rupert is going to give me on my next birthday—a typewriter, and

I am going to learn it. There is a nice girl in the Post Office in Warren Avenue who is going to teach me. It will be cheaper than keeping a secretary, and one of the two I must do if I am to cope with my correspondence. Well, now, dear child—I am a matron, and you are several years younger—Nobody is going to interrupt us except the servants when they bring tea, so we have got two clear hours before us to discuss your affairs. I do hope we are going to give you good advice. I have told Rupert, of course—he read your letter before going off to the City, and has sent me a vague but quite satisfactory answer on the telephone about Sir M. Is it *Moses?* That will be one of the worst difficulties to get over.'

'No. Since I wrote—I don't know how it never occurred to me before—we have looked him up—Aunt Ponsonby and I—in *Who's Who*, and we find the Christian name—and it really *is* a Christian name, for he is not a Jew any more than I am, and I don't think I should mind if he were; Jews are generally musical, and if they are not very mean they are very generous.—Well, not to tantalize you too much, we find it is only Matthew or Mattheus. Aunt Ponsonby is really a wonderful person, you know. She actually had a Dutch dictionary in her library! I think it was dated about 1840, so its information may be out of date. But if it is correct, the diminutive of my future husband's name in Dutch is really Teeuw, if I ever descend to diminutives. He is a person who rather

overawes me, but he is quite likeable. He is tall, for one thing, and a little gaunt. He looks like the veldt, on which he says he was born—I suppose in a house of some sort, but they might have been trekking in waggons. Well, as to all that—Yes, do let 's have tea early. I feel in a perfect whirl, though the news, till you have approved, is not circulated. People are already beginning to look at me with curious eyes. I suppose my being seen with him so frequently at dances and theatres—with Aunt Ponsonby—has already set tongues wagging.'

'Well,' said Rupert, on his return home after he had heard the gist of Clarry's conversation, 'I find he is esteemed to be a millionaire. He is in close relations with the De Beers Company, and is the chief financier who has been backing up the German diamond discoveries in South-West Africa. Being a millionaire, I think we ought to expect him to settle a hundred thousand pounds on Clarry and their children, so that if any crash happens after she is married, it will be all right.'

The next morning's post, as a matter of fact, brought a very civilly worded letter from Sir Mattheus, or rather Sir Matthew, as he had called himself since his knighthood. (He had very greatly facilitated the settling up of the Transvaal in 1902, and had been knighted at the same time that the annexation had conferred on him British citizenship.)

Rupert went to see him at his office in the City. Such an office!—only a step or two from the Mansion House—such plate glass, and a curiously

picturesque view of a handsome plane tree and fine buildings, rising up into the sky across a very distinguished courtyard.

Sir Matthew spoke English with just a slight colonial accent. He had spoken it indeed from the age of twelve, onwards and upwards. His early life, from his brief references to it, had been very adventurous, but a lucky find here and there of diamonds or of gold in the Transvaal had brought him rapidly great wealth. He had entered the gates of wealth without hesitation, and had helped himself handsomely. He had not shared any particularist Boer sentiments for a separate nationality, but had worked on the side of the international or British South African capitalists. He had rendered much assistance to the pacification in 1902, in which year he had definitely changed the spelling of his Christian name. He had married a pretty Boer girl when he was quite young, and she had died after only two or three years of marriage. He was not too talkative, was quite explicit, seemed a little cold, or it might be a little shy, but struck Rupert on the whole as being quite a safe person for his sister-in-law to marry. A hundred thousand pounds, at any rate, would be a good insurance.

So he promised to cable out to her father and extract a cabled acceptance in reply, and did so.

And the wedding—at St. Margaret's, Westminster —was fixed for early June.

Within a week after all these preliminaries were settled, Clarry was all that could be desired in radiant

good looks, in excited chatter and sweet acceptance of congratulations. She had enough human feeling about her to be particularly assiduous in thanking the Irish peasantry of Toomyvara, each girl among whom almost fancied *she* was marrying Sir M. Jacobus. As to where she was going to live after she was married, there was only the question of a country house to be decided. Sir Matthew had the most important of the three beautiful homes then existing on Hampstead Heath. His residence, with three or four (or was it five?) acres of garden on the westward slope below the splendid buildings, was in those days almost—one would have thought—of sufficient rurality; but the idea of choosing a really sweet place in the country—possibly in north Hampshire, where they could join a local hunt—appealed to Clarry. Sir Matthew merely rode a nice horse or two on Hampstead Heath or in Hyde Park to keep his liver from going wrong, and would probably, when it was brought before his consideration, esteem fox-hunting as foolish and purposeless, and rather too dangerous for people of middle age; but that crisis could be postponed for solution. Clarry, when she had gone over the premises on Hampstead Heath—had realized the two motors in the garage; the three riding-horses in the stables; the poultry in the back premises—not poultry for eating, but just for egg-laying, beauty of plumage, and rarity of breed; the aviary of pheasants and paroquets; the kitchen-garden of toothsome vegetables; the music-room with an organ in the recess; the conservatories where afternoon tea could

be served; the picture gallery of really good modern paintings, and a special collection of Josef Israel's masterpieces; and the wonderful view stretching towards Harrow and the then unspoilt Wembley Hill—thought here were enough delights to be explored till she reached satiation and the transference of her affections to a country house.

So the marriage took place, and was attended with some pomposity by the returned Governor of New South Wales, who gave the bride away, and the bride's mother, Lady Tipperary, lent her some wonderful Chantilly lace for a bridal veil.

Then followed the statutory honeymoon. Clarry realized she did not love her husband. His bedroom manners struck her—she could not say why—as singularly old-fashioned and fussy. There was none of the gallantry of youth. A good-looking young man—she said to herself—could not have seemed to her ridiculous when he went through his toilet, dressed and undressed himself, got into bed or out of bed. Nothing would seem uncouth, ugly or ridiculous if it were performed by stalwart, well-moulded arms and legs. Curly hair, if not too long, never looks frowzy, and does not need a nightcap—Sir Matthew always wore a nightcap. He did not sleep in spectacles, but all through the toilet processes of the morning he was constantly mislaying his glasses, which he wore as pince-nez. She noticed his knees once as he was just beginning to clothe himself after his bath, and there were strange wrinkles and sagging folds of muscles about them

which she had not thought consistent with the knees of statues or of her own shapely frame. . . . However, disquietude, slight disgust, a desire not to investigate too far lest the resultant discoveries might be further disenchanting, were more the characteristics of the honeymoon. They went, of course, to Paris at starting; travelled with all the luxuries possible in 1904. From Paris—she did not like the French maid, by the bye, who had been engaged to travel with her—they journeyed to Brussels and to Groningen in Friesland to visit those connections of Sir Matthew's who had remained in Holland, had not migrated to South Africa. These were people so antiquely Dutch that their strange old-fashioned ideas struck athwart the melancholy of Clarry's mind with gleams of laughter; but there was no one with whom she could share her merriment. Something told her instinctively that Matthew would have no sense of humour as far as his Frisian cousins were concerned. He entered heartily into their homely little ways, their homely meals, and, of course, talked with them in Dutch, or even—though she could hardly have been aware of this—in Friesisch. In her unfurnished Anglo-Irish mind, and in the wretched education she had derived from a Dublin girls' school of the highest order, she was not aware that the language of the Friesland people is Anglo-Saxon brought down to the date of to-day. She only gathered from her husband's elucidatory remarks that many Friesland words and expressions had travelled out a hundred years, two hundred years ago

to South Africa, and become noteworthy in the Cape Dutch speech.

She smiled rather patronizingly at the receipt of this information. However, it was the beautiful weather of early summer which visits Holland as it does other parts of Europe some time between the end of May and the middle of July; and you must indeed be an unintelligent, unimprovable human being if you cannot be interested in Holland and in its northern provinces. He took her to the sea coast.

They journeyed south-west into Holland proper. They visited the bulb farms along the coast of Kennemerland. It was, of course, out of the spring flowering season; the daffodils, the hyacinths, the tulips had ceased blooming, or were lank and squalid in decay. There flourished instead roses, lilies, delphiniums, paeonies, and campanulas that were coming into bloom and roused Clarry's admiration, though, of course, she was completely ignorant on the subject of flowering plants, as were most girls of her day, twenty years ago.

Still, the sight of this orderly beauty roused her interest. That of her husband was as nearly passionate in matters of horticulture as was any other feeling in his cold, restrained nature. She listened patiently to the gabble in Dutch, slightly interested where she could recognize a word; for these conversations struck her as being held in a mincingly-pronounced form of eastern English, the language of the sturdy peasants she had met on a cousin's property in Suffolk.

Amsterdam fascinated her. They stayed at an exceedingly comfortable hotel. The beauty of the city and its suburbs, its galleries of pictures, even its museums, appealed to her uncultured tastes. Life at last seemed worth living. She was becoming used and indifferent to Matthew's funny little ways. After all, he appreciated comfort to the full, and had good taste as regards meals and music.

'Would you like to go to Italy?' he asked.

'Well, if I may say what I really think, I would like to see a little more of Holland. It is fascinating, and it has taught me a lot of things I never knew before. Let us spend another week here, and then go back to Paris and look at the hat shops and the milliners, and see Versailles once again; and then return to London and let me really explore your house at Hampstead; it seems to me, in my remembrance, nearly worthy of Holland; it made me marry you as much as anything else.'

He looked pleased, even kindly; reached out and pressed her hand; and on their subsequent afternoon walk took her into an Amsterdam jeweller's and bought her a particularly beautiful bracelet.

Though Clarry was by no means a specially mercenary person in character, this action opened her mind to new considerations. She had lost the satisfaction of some desires and longings in not marrying a person like Clarence; but, after all, wealth and its means of showing you the beautiful side of life was not a bad compensation; so something like affection began to spring up in her mind for her wealthy husband.

When they reached Paris a week afterwards, there was almost a touch of homeliness about it. The Paris she had seen three weeks before had struck her as 'horrid.' She had taken very little interest in Versailles, she had disliked the French maid, mainly because it was almost impossible to understand what was said, for Clarry's acquaintance with real French then was what was twenty years ago the case with most men and women of these islands. Now she began to understand her better, even thought that underneath her hard manner she too might have ordinary human feelings. Perhaps she had been in love? So the second visit to Paris was wholly enjoyable, and Sir Matthew's generosity had really to be prudently restrained. She had to point out that if he gave her so many pretty things here they would have to be packed to bring home to England, and thus might tempt adroit thieves to rifle their baggage at the hotel or at the station.

One day near the middle of July they safely reached Victoria Station. There they were met by Sir Matthew's own motor — the large one — and thus they rolled in a quarter of an hour to Hampstead. They arrived there in the early evening, in full golden daylight, of course. The house was slightly lit with electric light, which added to the fairy-like aspect of the interior. When the sunset had faded, the light was turned full on; and Clarry felt she had not paid too dearly to secure this marriage and this home.

CHAPTER IX

MORE MARRIAGES AND A DEATH

PEGGY CUTHBERTSON had begun to irritate her father. If anything went wrong with the garden (on which he feared he was beginning to expend too much of his time and attention), if the Cathedral foundations or the unexpected crumbling of its masonry gave cause for anxiety, Peggy was there, ready to assure them that the frost had *not* killed *Multidigitata macclesfieldii*—the foliage plant from Texas—and that the Cathedral's foundations would not give anxiety for another hundred years. As a matter of fact, they soon gave such unanswerable evidence of rottenness that the authorities in their panic had to go into debt to save an actual crumbling at the back of the chancel.

Peggy took a 'bright' view of this catastrophe; but though her father groaned at the possible expense, he offered less resistance than he might have done to allowing her £150 a year on which to live in London with Miss Japes for a year or two, and try there to earn her living in Optimist circles. Needless to say, these vague activities and enthusiasms were soon directed and consolidated into a vehement support of the revived claim for Women's Rights. The opening of 1906, and the disappointing attitude adopted by the Liberal Ministry towards the question, turned Peggy into a vehement worker for the Women's Cause. She became a Suffragist, whom neither imprisonment nor forcible feeding

could shake. She was positively dreaded by Downing Street. Her face—a pleasant one when not convulsed with rage—any peculiarity there might be in her figure or her dress, became imprinted on the retina of the police told off to guard the approaches to the official buildings in Whitehall and St. James's Park. 'This,' she thought with some gratification, 'would never have happened if I had gone on living in Winchester.'

The Suffrage organization relieved her father of her maintenance from 1906 onwards.

Herbrand Parkyns, freed from Irita by a deliberately committed, duly attested adultery at an hotel and a quickly conducted divorce case afterwards, shook himself—so to speak—turned round and looked at life to see what he was going to do with it. The obliging lady who had obtained him his freedom was generously supposed to be on the stage; she did indeed undertake small rôles at the —— or the —— theatres, but she was rapidly drifting into the position of a quite respectable person, who for a fee of a hundred guineas or so would lend herself to secure a discreet divorce, following an incident or two at Brighton, or at a first-class London hotel.

Herbrand, however, had no wish to pursue the acquaintance any further. Irita had parted from him with many tears, privately shed, with a degree of unhappiness which would have been unbearable but for Addie's kindness and inexhaustible sympathy. Herbrand at any rate gained a secure two thousand

a year — and no further responsibility — by his American marriage. With what he had in addition of his own, he was able to dispose of an annual income of something like £2700 a year; and this for a bachelor not obliged to live expensively was fairly good. He took a pretty house in Berkshire, in the Thames Valley, not then as much done to death, over-built, abused as it may be now. He bought a motor and a comfortable steam launch. In January he ran out to Monte Carlo and gambled prudently, and generally with some profit; in March-April he was in London, where he had a bedroom at his club; in May he fussed about Epsom and other race-courses. In June he went to Ascot and gave some bachelor parties on the Thames. In July and August he paid some country visits, where he was a good deal sought after as a possibly marriageable person, when just a little more time had gone by and people had begun to forget about his divorce. In September and October he shot partridges and pheasants on great estates. In November and December he stayed principally at home. His house was very cosy, and there was always London and the club bedroom to run up to—and so in 1904 and 1905 he had a jolly good time.

In the spring of 1905 he thought he would go for a motor tour in the West of England. He made his way to the Malvern Hills, and pronounced them ripping. Then, somewhat aimlessly, he wandered through Herefordshire to Leominster. On the outskirts of this beautiful old town he stopped his motor to investigate something which had gone wrong. He

was outside a rather forlorn-looking house, out of keeping with the settled sixteenth-century, seventeenth-century, at latest eighteenth-century looks of Leominster dwellings. A woman was there gardening in the front garden or picking roses. As he looked up from his punctured tire across the intervening hedge, their eyes met. Her face was strangely familiar. What did it recall, five or six years ago? Mrs. Toomis, *Greta Toomis!* Incidentally he recalled old funnyments on board the steamer that brought them to England—'Nutmeg-grater,' and so on. She continued staring bewildered into his eyes. Then she advanced slowly towards the wooden gate of the garden.

'Have you come to call? Surely it cannot be . . . Major Parkyns, *Bertie!* . . .'

'*Greta!* It *is* you! Amazing! No, I had not come deliberately to call—hadn't the faintest idea that you lived here—only remembered it was somewhere in the west counties. Something 's happened to my tire . . . a puncture. But now do tell me all about yourself. May I come in? I have not got a chauffeur with me, but the car will be all right, and if I cannot mend the tire myself, I will go back into Leominster.'

She mutely assented to his entrance into the garden; then, as they neared the hall door, she turned and said sadly:

'I am a widow now. My husband has been dead six months. He never fully recovered from his South African wound.'

He entered the house with her. Its interior was distinctly shabby, badly furnished, out of repair. There was a little more brightness — blooming flowers, pretty silks in the drawing-room, where they sat, Greta dabbing with a handkerchief at her tearful eyes.

'Well,' he said, 'things ain't been bright for either of us, seems to me. I married an American girl in nineteen-one. Never hit it off with her. Perhaps I was to blame, perhaps she was. My sister Addie says it was all my fault. But she gave birth to a child prematurely—a little horror it was, and I was so disgusted I could never take to her again, and so I drifted about till at last I got her to divorce me in nineteen-ought-four.'

Greta Toomis's sobs quieted down. She gave her eyes a final dab, and looked up at him so prettily, that the intervening years fell off her face, and she was once more the pretty woman he had loved without seriousness on the homeward passage.

'Well, now,' she said, 'except that I have got out of believing in Providence, I should say this meeting was providential. But I won't waste time on these remarks. It is half-past twelve. Stay to lunch; or get your tire mended and come back to lunch—half-past one—not a minute later—and I will forgive you everything, and we will talk once more like the friends we were—ah me!' (with an exaggerated tone) 'long ago!'

Herbrand assented, found he could hobble with his punctured tire back into Leominster. There he

handed it over to a garage for repair, and walked out to Rose Villa, as the house was ineptly called, arriving only a quarter of an hour late for lunch.

And under all the circumstances the lunch was a wonderful little meal, daintily cooked and promptly served by the one maidservant.

After it was over, and they both sat smoking his cigarettes, he said :

' Now look here, my dear, *I* begin to believe in Providence, not perhaps the Providence of our forefathers, which was too starchy for enjoyment ; but still, we won't go into all that. . . . This is my idea of what we will do. You 're hipped, stands to reason. . . . Where 's your husband's mother ? '

' Oh, she lives in Hereford, but I never got on with her very well. . . .'

' Well, look here : if you find it necessary to give an explanation to your servant, and if you can trust her in charge of the house . . . it don't seem to me much worth burgling. . . . Tell her I 'm an old friend of the family and you have got to go away with me to look into some business. I 'll motor you up to London. . . . Jove ! We *will* have a little bit of a lark ! Put you up at a good hotel, stay with you a bit. . . . We will see how things turn out.'

She accepted his half-delineated proposals. When they were in London, at a nice, well-found, discreet, supremely comfortable hotel in Dover Street, she lived with him as his wife, gave him her solicitor's address, advised him to look into her affairs suffi-

ciently to realize she spoke the truth, confessed to an income (from her husband) of not less than £300 a year, and in the autumn of 1905 they were quietly married at a registry office between Piccadilly and Oxford Street.

'Was that the end of Herbrand's life so far as you can relate it?'

Dear me, no. He was then only about twenty-nine. So far as his easy, selfish disposition was concerned, he would turn round and congratulate himself on the way things had turned out. Greta Parkyns was just the sort of wife he was built for. She was a damn' fine woman, only a year or two older than himself.

'Rupert,' said Addie one morning as he came into breakfast; it was in June 1905—'I have just been reading a letter from Aunt Charlotte, which contains a staggering piece of news for us—I mean for me, at any rate. "Ninnie" is married!—has been married, it seems, for eighteen months, or some such time, and married to one of our housemaids at Toomyvara!'

Rupert looked up from the usual worry caused by his own morning letters, and tried to clear his face to receive this other family trouble, which gave him much less concern.

'Oh! I confess I am not altogether startled. I had my doubts and suspicions. It seemed so odd his leaving Toomyvara to live—apparently all alone—at that other place—Belsize, or whatever it is

called, near Clodagh, up in Ulster. I have only been to see him there once, and I was vaguely conscious of an air of strain and mystery about him and the whole establishment. However, give me the details, if you know them.'

'Well, you know that girl we had as a housemaid —Lucy Crommelin? She was very pretty, I admit, and quite a nice girl. She was daughter of a farmer on our estate—I dare say you remember him? He had been a sergeant in the R.I.C. He had married one of our maids, and when he retired from the force, Father let him take a farm on our estate, near the Devil's Peak. Well, then we took his eldest daughter into our service as a maid. I think she was seventeen or eighteen at the time, and she was singularly tidy and neat-handed for an Irish maid, and, I admit, quite pretty, and quite well educated for her class. She took particular interest in Ninnie's rooms and his telescope and gave them special attention, but I did not think anything of that. She got on well with Aunt Charlotte, and we all liked her. Father particularly liked *her* father. I think he had been in the army before he became a constable. However, this is what is called a scandal in high life, and it will upset Father even more than Mother, because his ideas are more old-fashioned.'

'Well, but how has it remained so long unknown to the rest of us—eighteen months?'

'Partly on account of Father's absence in Australia, and partly Ninnie's extreme reticence about his affairs. However, it seems she is just going to have a baby,

and so Ninnie felt the time had come to make the disclosure. Aunt Char — here is her letter — says they were quite properly married; but Mother is so overwrought with it that she has gone to bed, and Father has nearly had an apoplectic fit. I do think Ninnie could have done the thing more considerately. I suppose it is his astronomy that makes him so inhuman.'

'Perhaps it is. But we must not judge him too severely till we know all the circumstances. When did she leave your service?'

'Read Aunt Char's letter, and she will give you all the particulars. I know nothing more than she tells me.'

He read the letter.

'She left your service, I see, about eighteen months ago, some months before your father returned, and apparently straightaway went to Clodagh and married Ninnie there. And seemingly her own father was at the wedding. Well, I never! It was all very systematically planned, and her father and mother kept the secret apparently all through the intervening time. *What* a fuss it will make in the papers!'

But somehow it did not. I cannot remember how it was managed. Lord Nenagh was very little known in the London world, where the 'papers' mostly matter. The leading London journals a few weeks later stated without much emotion or many words that a son and heir to Lord Nenagh, the eldest son

of the Earl of Tipperary, had been born at Clodagh in County Down, and London scarcely glanced at the news or expressed any interest in the matter. One society journal reminded its readers that Lord Nenagh had attained certain distinctions twelve years ago at Cambridge, and ever since had acquired a growing renown as a student of astronomy, to whom was due the thesis on the minor planets, and some remarkable suggestions on the composition of Jupiter and the revolutions of Jupiter's moons. Then the great world turned once more all its attention on political problems, the projected dissolution of Parliament by Balfour, and the impending General Election.

'It is awfully tiresome, Ninnie's unfortunate choice —I mean, tiresome from its effects on Mother and Father — but I do not see why it should compel us to get rid of Molly Cranford, our invaluable nurse? The children are so attached to her, and she understands them so well. She is devoted to Regent's Park, and gets on with all the other servants. I think one day soon I will call her in for a little confidential talk and break the subject to her, that her cousin has married my eldest brother. I will put it to her that all we expect at her hands is a reasonable amount of discretion. After all, but for her devotion to the children—and she really saved Rupy's life when he had diphtheria—I do not think she slept for *two or three nights*, nursing him—I think she would have married again, found a home

of her own. Irishwomen, in spite of politics, seem to be enormously attractive to men in London. There it is! I expect she will stay on with us till the children have grown up, and then we shall have to pension her off. But she is a really good soul, and I always feel, if I wanted to go away for any length of time—to go out with you to Australia or take another long holiday—*she* is the person I could leave behind with confidence to look after the children!'

Thus Addie to her husband on further consideration of her brother's marriage. And she proved a true prophetess of events as they ultimately turned out. Mrs. Cranford has not been pensioned off, but she remains with Rupert and his wife as a kind of housekeeper, always in charge of Sussex House, always to be relied on, and always discreet in her relationship to the young Lady Tipperary.

As soon as Lady Nenagh was convalescent, after her confinement, her husband came over to see Rupert and Addie. His sister told him freely that she was offended and puzzled at his secrecy — he might at any rate have told *them*, who were not as closely bound up with old prejudices as his other relations might be; that Rupert had felt the lack of confidence deeply, for he had a firm and reasoned liking for his brother-in-law.

Rupert, on coming into his wife's boudoir at the close of these remarks, confirmed her statement.

'I have growing troubles of my own, as you *don't*

know, for we have not met for a friendly talk for quite a year. I am afraid I shall have to put other things aside before long and go out to Australia to overhaul my company and its goings-on. That is one reason why I have withdrawn from North Marylebone as a parliamentary candidate; besides, the fact is that our side seems to be losing the confidence of the British public, with all this absurd tangle and upset over Balfour and Chamberlain. I admit to feeling so worried and hipped over this check as to take a much-diminished interest in other people's affairs. Still, I felt that one of the many things I had gained by marrying Addie was a brother like you, in whom I took the greatest interest. I *do* think you might have told us. . . . I am glad you 've got a son and heir. But I am afraid your poor old father is awfully cut up.'

'Well, I won't plead "not guilty,"' said Nenagh, looking down at his knees. 'I feel in some ways I have deserved your rebuke and Addie's. But what *is* a fellow to do who has just got enough to live on, and wants to devote the best part of his life to astronomical research? My not having married was becoming quite a source of anxiety to my parents. That you know. Herbrand's utter mess over *his* marriage, and his not having—at any rate as yet—secured an heir to the peerage, and then again a real affection that had grown up in my mind for my wife, months before I ever proposed to her. . . . And then she was of thoroughly decent stock, physically and mentally. I think her father is one

of the best men of his class I ever met. He is a real *man*, and his wife we know all about, as she was for years in our household before she married him. And no one can say my wife is not pretty—I might almost say a downright beauty. As regards education, she has got about as good a one as most other Irishwomen at the present day: *very* few—about five per cent.—of them are really well educated. But Luce—well, all I can say is that when you meet her—and I sincerely hope you will agree to meet her before long—she won't startle you at all by not knowing this, that, and the other thing; or by her accent, which is not much more Irish than Aunt Char's—and we none of us find fault with *that*. . . .'

'Well,' said his brother-in-law, 'that is all there is to be said about it. You have married a pretty and a healthy woman, and she has given you an heir; and your father will probably soon get used to the unconventional choice you have made. The great thing is—as I look at it—that she is thoroughly healthy and seems to come of a wholesome stock. Now, then, don't let 's be disagreeable any more. I think you might have told me long before what you had done or were going to do, and I 'd have played up; for I like you, Nenagh, better than most fellows I have met, and I always want to be your friend. I suppose you will put up with us now you *are* in London?'

'I have left my things at the Midland Hotel, but I will. They can stay there till after lunch—if you

are going to give me any lunch. And now tell me all about *your* troubles; for I am sure you have got plenty. Everybody has them nowadays—religion or marriage or stocks and shares, rents, Acts of Parliament, or ingrowing toe-nails, or teeth that want stopping. I have come to London partly to see a dentist.'

'Well, I will show you your room, and you can have a wash and a tidying-up and a rest there if you like till lunch-time, which is rather early to-day, for a variety of reasons which I will give you later if you really want them.'

With this speech Addie led him upstairs to the nicer of the two spare rooms—the third and fourth rooms had been given up to the nursery. There was a third spare room at the back only allotted to younger or humbler guests.

'This is very comfortable,' said her brother, advancing towards the windows; 'what a charming look-out over the Park! I had no idea there was so much scenery in Regent's Park. I thought that the trees were bound to be stunted, and that you would see Hanoverian princes riding up and down with their grooms. It is quite a distinguished outlook, on the contrary, and there are charming flower-beds in the foreground and little lakes in the middle distance. Well, I am very glad we are reconciled once again. My proceedings must have seemed to you erratic to the point of mania; and perhaps they may have been. When you see Lucy again you will realize how she has expanded and developed; like

a bud that has opened into a flower. I think you know me long enough to understand that my devo tion to the pursuit of knowledge in the solar system —I won't say the stars ; they are too far off, and I have quite enough to master in the planets of our system—well, what I mean is that I think you will understand I really could not spare the time or the effort to affect interest in searching for a wife amongst what are called people of our class. I had no money to give her as a dowry ; no time to waste on court-ship. I was very much drawn towards Lucy a year, two years, three years before I thought of marrying her. The impulse to do so and to beget an heir only came to me when Herbrand's marriage seemed to be utterly fruitless. Of course Branksome and Donald will very probably marry and get children, but I wanted to make sure. We don't want the title —poor as it may seem nowadays—to pass to the Eglinton Parkynses. They are not even Irish, and live in Wales. By the bye, I suppose you know *we* have a small Welsh property—in Radnorshire. It is not much more than a large farm, but I am going to have a look at it on my way back to Belfast. I hear from Mother that Father is in some trouble about it because the tenant is dead and he cannot get a satisfactory successor.'

'Oh, that is very interesting. I do not think I ever realized that we had anything on this side of the Irish Sea. I must tell Rupert. I must also leave you now and go downstairs, or I shall not finish my work before lunch.' So she went out.

Rupert was in the dining-room, tasting rather dubiously some Australian wine he had been urgently pressed to popularize. He himself was almost a teetotaller, forced into abstaining by the frightful extent of indulgence in spirits then afflicting so much of Australia and often paralysing her energies. Australian wines he had thought very good and very palatable in Australia, but they did not seem to be able to reach England without having been heavily brandied. Otherwise they went sour. As this subject occupied his thoughts, he lent but a feigned interest to the statement of the Radnorshire property; so Addie hastened to introduce her second subject.

'I believe it is nearly twelve, and when I think of all the questions I have got to settle and the letters to write before I sit down to lunch I become frantic, and then go and waste my time in developing some other source of worry. I have been meaning to tell you all the morning, but have somehow forgotten, that not only have we had to settle our attitude towards Ninnie's marriage this morning, but I have had to ask Gladys to come and stay a few days. She is arriving to-morrow, and I have got to write and put off Donald till Ninnie goes, because otherwise we shall not have room. How exasperating relations are! Either they won't come near you when you want to settle some little thing quickly, or they come in shoals, after they have married their deceased wife's sister or become Mohammedans.'

Gladys—her full name was Gladys Somerville

Parkyns—was about seventeen in 1902, and did not in any way swim into history until three years afterwards. She was not so pretty as her sisters Addie and Clarry, nor so quietly capable and perfectly managing as Justina. She was a little inclined to fumble at life after she left school at eighteen, and had a dangerous tendency to be interested in The Woman's Cause. This, of course, caused friction with her irritable father when he returned from Australia in 1904 and went to live, almost to retire from political life, at Toomyvara. Addie was made aware of this in Gladys's and in her mother's letters, so she asked Gladys to come and stay with her in the early summer of 1905.

At this period, likewise, her brother Donald was a cause of anxiety. He had had some surgical treatment at school for his nose, which had cured him of the open mouth that originated his nickname of 'the Gaper,' and by the time he was eighteen or nineteen he was growing into a very good-looking young man. What was he to do? In Ireland he was developing a passion for riding, which indicated a cavalry career; but then he seemed totally incapable of passing any examination which—as all cavalry examinations did in those days—tangled him up with the literature of Ancient Greece, with Roman history, the New Testament, and the Books of Euclid. His father, after the long stay in Australia, had developed such an irritable mind that the consideration of Donald's future career only added to his worries. Rupert must be appealed to. Lord

Tipperary came over to London in early July, and accepted hospitality at Sussex House.

'Rupert, have *you* any career to suggest for this boy? He is a damned good rider, almost a circus performer, it seems to me; but he has got no head for books; he simply hates reading—likes to be out of doors in the open air, wet through or stone dry, and there is no opening for him on my estate. You know our troubles over Crommelin, and how I have had to swallow my pride and keep on my son's father-in-law in the management of the estate. If I displace him or send him away, I shall be in the same hole as are most of the Irish landlords of to-day. Somehow or other this man runs the estate like magic. I have suffered a good deal in one way and another by being out in Australia. I actually in the long run had to spend in true truth a trifle more than my salary.'

'Poor Maud!' said Addie one morning to her spouse, putting down a letter from Maud's husband, Francis Cuthbertson.

'I am quite willing to acknowledge the comparative poverty,' said Rupert, 'though I understood they now had as much as five or six hundred pounds a year; but they have a lot of children—I forget how many at the moment. In what sense is the poverty oppressive?'

'I was not thinking of their means for the moment,' his wife replied. 'I mean her dismalness and her lack of health. Francis writes me a positively tragic

letter. She is threatened with appendicitis, and she has got some kind of womb trouble which she has had ever since the birth of the last child' (sighs). 'I suppose it means help from us in some direction.'

'Well, we must see. *I* have not hurt her womb, and *you* have not given her appendicitis. She is that maddening type of woman who, during all the first fifty years of her life, passes from one expensive illness to another. Toss me the letter.'

She tossed it. He read it frowningly. It was full of ornate and courtly phrases from Francis writing to his sister-in-law. Maud would have to go into a nursing home, have an expensive operation. . . . All things that could be foreseen would mount up to about a hundred pounds, and they had no savings. Their second child was developing some costly trouble with its teeth, and the dentist's bill must be met . . . and so forth.

'I am damned well sick of them,' said the exasperated brother. 'Write and tell him all we can do in the matter is to lend him thirty or forty pounds, which, of course, he will never repay. But—equally of course—she won't die from the operation, which would be about the most economical thing she could do. Now let 's talk of other things.'

Maud in sequence went into a nursing home in August, and got out of it again with an indebtedness of £90, including the surgeon's fee, of which Rupert paid £50, and eventually sent them a Christmas gift to cover the remainder, 'or else their poor little kiddies will run short in food or treats or something.'

Maud, through the autumn of 1905, was said to look 'a shadow of her former self,' but, as Rupert said, her former self had never cast a very bright light, so the shadow must be thin and sickly. 'Ask the poor wretch up to London to stay with us,' he said.

She came; very poorly equipped in clothes for exhibition in London by a sister 'in society,' and Addie had to go to some private expense to fit her out with at any rate two new dresses, a nice-looking hat, some under-linen, and some night garments which would satisfy the critical taste of her housemaid.

Maud was grateful, but remained of a gloomy cast of mind. She was beginning to believe with some fervour in the Second Coming of Christ; but this impending event, instead of cheering her up as a solution of coming troubles—for if it occurred you surely could not be expected to pay your bills, puzzle over your children's health or their schooling—did not impart any cheerfulness to her outlook. She was only staggered to realize what a very small proportion of London society, or of the London millions outside society, could be 'caught up' at the Second Coming. Hell, or at any rate some vague and gloomy Purgatory, would be, she felt, overstocked with humanity.

With mid-October came alarming news of Lord Tipperary's health. Rupert, distracted with Australian business, had to wrench his attention to his father-in-law's condition. Lord Tipperary had

refused to see his eldest son, had tried as a distraction to give himself up to pheasant-shooting, and then after three days of poor sport had been suddenly stricken down with a bad paralytic seizure. Lady Tipperary and Aunt Charlotte could think only of Rupert as an adviser; so Rupert, swallowing groans at the interruption of Australian arguments, packed up hastily and went over.

'Oh, Rupert, I am so glad, so *relieved* you have come!' exclaimed his mother-in-law. 'Poor Joseph is in a very bad state. He has really had a stroke, though we don't tell him so, but the poor dear guesses it because he cannot speak properly and cannot masticate his food.'

Then burst on them Lady Charlotte, her cheeks for the nonce no longer rosy, much sorrow imprinted on her wrinkled face.

'Dear Rupert, *how* good of you to come! Poor Chrissy has been utterly overcome with all this sorrow, these maddening telegrams and heartbreaking disclosures by letter, though I have said to them both repeatedly, "*Why* break your hearts? It is not, after all, any *money* disaster, which really *does* do so, if you have to leave your home or incur disgrace." After all—as I have said to Chrissy—Lucy *is* and *was* a very pretty girl and *quite* well behaved; and now she has given birth to the heir we must all settle down and make the *best* of things. I try to say the same things to poor Joe, but he will not even let me begin. He is so old-fashioned that he sees disgrace in this *mésalliance*; whereas, as I have said to Chrissy, if

you read up the old seventeenth- and eighteenth-century stories of the family, you will find this kind of marriage has occurred over and over again—has occurred often without being a *proper* marriage; and *this one* has been *entirely* regular, beyond a doubt. Her own father was present at the wedding. Joe felt that he ought to be dismissed from his tenancy for backing his daughter up, but of course such an idea could not be supported in law.'

Thus Lady Charlotte, who did not even end where I have finished her speech, but continued her comments as Rupert was shown along the corridors to a room wherein he could wash and remove the traces of travel and prepare himself for lunch a little later, after which he would be conducted to the sick-room.

It was his own bedroom of former times, of the opening years of the new century, and the honeymoon remembrances, as it were, arose and touched his heart. After lunch he was duly conducted to his father-in-law's bedchamber, where he saw a grievously smitten figure lying on the large four-poster bed, his head and shoulders propped up with pillows, but with that shocking look in the face and features of a man who has had the death-blow.

I have not the heart to repeat in mimicry the broken sentences and jumbled words of Lord Tipperary's greeting.

'Dear father-in-law,' Rupert exclaimed, sitting down by the bed and holding the cold, nerveless hand of the stricken man, 'I don't want to overwhelm you with a flood of speech, or to say how sorry I am for

your condition : I only want to impress this on your mind, even if I hurt your feelings—That you are greatly exaggerating the effects of this blow—Ninnie's marriage. In considering such unions at the present day, the *first* consideration is *health*. Nenagh '—his father-in-law, in his mind-upset, continually referred to him as ' Charles ' or ' Charlie,' as he had been known thirty years back—' Nenagh, or Charlie of long ago, has certainly married a healthy, modest, nice-looking young woman of eminently sound physical stock. All that has to be borne in mind. It may annoy you that her father was once a soldier, a constable, and is now a farmer ; but he is an upright, fine-looking man, and her mother has been of equally good stock ; and she herself, your daughter-in-law, has borne—I am told—a sound, hearty-looking infant as heir to the old peerage. Nenagh, I dare say, has not much money, but then he is not extravagant, and does not live beyond his means. That is a thing to be thankful for. Herbrand has been a scapegrace ; but whether he has behaved well or ill to his wife, he has paid his old debts and has enough to live on, is not likely ever to come on you for more. Since I returned from Australia, *my* financial position is all right, and I am doing what I can to help your other children. Three of your daughters are well provided for. I hear nothing but satisfactory news of " Justy " and her husband in New South Wales. She is so happy, contented, and comfortably settled, you cannot think. I hope Addie gives a good account of *me* ? And Clarry, though

her husband is not a beauty, is very well off; and if she is not thoroughly contented—well, we none of us are *that*, if we have got any intelligence.

'Now I have talked to you long enough for the moment, but I am going to stay on here till you are better, and I shall look in on you as often as Lady Tipperary or the doctor will let me.

'When I am not with you I shall go out into the dear old woods and try to kill some pheasants. I hear you have greatly improved the shooting here since you returned.'

Then he embraced the inert, paralysed hand and left the scarcely conscious man, who died the next day.

CHAPTER X

RUPERT RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA

ADDIE dabbed her eyes with a rather ineffective pocket-handkerchief, because there were quite enough tears to have moistened one of sensible size. Having done this, she lay back on her pillows.

'Well, it is heart-breaking to think that you are going away, for goodness knows how long: just simply heart-breaking. If it were not for the children, I should insist on going too. But I could not take a tiny baby with me and leave the others in Aunt Charlotte's charge—if she could be induced to come over. If you are going to explore mines, and ride out into the wildest, emptiest part of Australia, I should end by being a ghastly nuisance. I dare not ask you when you will come back, because you never tell me the full truth—you will make out it is going to be much shorter than it really will be.'

'I certainly will not do that deliberately. In many ways I am just as afflicted as you are over this break in our absolutely happy married life. I am sure, however, that if I do not go now I shall regret it. Something will go wrong that I cannot set right. The value of my shares will fall, and I shall be too distracted over frantic efforts to set things right ever to enter Parliament. Besides . . . it is better I should go away now, and give you a long rest after that last confinement. It has pulled you down, and old Breslau tells me he thinks you have been having too many children. So cheer up, darling of

darlings. Let 's imagine I shall not be away more than a year, and think of what a heavenly time we shall have afterwards. I shall take Holroyd to look after me. His wife, it seems, is in much the same condition as you are, and will be all the happier for a period of rest during which she can look after the children she has got. As it is, she has left off being your maid long since, and is simply living on in our back premises to look after her children. . . . Holroyd's spirits leapt at the excitement of again riding and fossicking, and sleeping out in the open—he forgets the mosquitoes !—and living a reasonably rough life. And to him there is a positive joy in seeing the great world from the deck of a big ship. . . . I 'll try and secure some one to take his place before I go. . . . How about a good man from Toomy vara ? . . . The footman there struck me as rather smart. . . .

' My passage is taken for three weeks hence, and we will have as jolly a three weeks together as I can arrange.'

' I suppose you are going by the P. & O. ? '

' *Not at all* : just what I am *not* going to do. My plan is quite a different one. I do not see why I should not combine with my duties—it 's a damned nuisance having to go at all—some element of pleasure and interest. I want to stop in Ceylon, first of all, and arrange a meeting there with Meredith—if it can be managed. Then I have always wanted to see something of the Malay Archipelago. Some day, when there is a railway right across Australia from

Melbourne to Palmerston, and another from Singapore to Calcutta - Teheran - Constantinople - Calais, Australians will specialize on these wonderful Malay Islands, which, from what they say, are some of the most beautiful, picturesque places in the world. What I am aiming at will be to go out by some line like the "Orient" to Ceylon, try and catch a glimpse at Meredith there—he can run over from Madura; and then get a Dutch boat or a German to take me on to Sumatra and Java, and through the Torres Straits to Queensland. D'you see?'

And this was the plan he carried out. To begin with, the sight of Ceylon—even though its mountains did not ascend much beyond eight thousand feet—with its temples and monuments to dead religions, its wonderful trees, its amazing creepers and multiform flowers, its four or five different types of natives and European immigrants, down to the most remarkable of all, the Veddas—a kind of degenerate, long-ago relation of the aboriginal Australian—was a great episode. He had sufficiently the eye of a landscape painter to fall in love with its waterways; its palms, pandanus, ebony, tamarind, cinnamon and satin-wood trees; its rhododendrons and magnolias on the mountains; its fruit-pigeons, paroquets, and jungle-fowl, its marvellous coloured jays and pies; its grim crocodiles and beautiful tree-snakes; its climbing perch—fishes, like our own ancestors of thirty, forty million years ago, climbing trees, wishing—yearning—to pass their lives outside the water, with only enough to keep their gills moist-

ened. Rupert heaved many a sigh that his mining business could not be transported to this enchanting country. Holroyd might have been equally cheery, but that he unfortunately contracted dysentery—perhaps he drank water unguardedly in the thirst of the jungle.

At the end of ten days they returned to Colombo, and there was Meredith waiting to see them at the hotel.

'Well, old chap, how are you getting on?'

Meredith looked to Rupert thinner in the face, paler in complexion, but more manly than he remembered him several years ago. His manner, however, struck his elder brother as rather nervous, and he had an inclination to stammer. After a meal together and a quiet smoke of Trichinopoly cheroots afterwards, the stammer and the look of worry passed off.

'Well, now then, frankly, tell me how you are getting on. Tell me all your secrets. Been making a fool of yourself in any way?'

'N-no—at least, I don't think so. I am really awfully interested in these forestry questions, in botany, don't you know; and the scenery in the south of India is very beautiful. But they are cutting down the forest too fast, I think, to plant cocoa, coffee, and rubber above all. The planters pay very little attention to our recommendations and prohibitions, and the Government of India does not accord us enough support. Of course, I quite understand that the planters are impatient to make profits; but they are so impatient that to secure a good three

years of high dividends they would clear out afterwards and let the country go to rack and ruin. My superior officer, Mr. Atlee, tries to show them this, and . . .'

'You seem to see a great deal of Mrs. Atlee, I gather. I hope it is all right, and you are not playing the fool in any way. What is your age now, by the bye?'

'Twenty-five. How did you hear about Mrs. Atlee and . . .?'

'You always seem to be bringing her into your letters to Mother. It is only that I am in a great hurry to assure myself that you *are* all right, before I leave you for another two years, that makes me put these questions.'

'Of course I am all right. Mrs. Atlee is very kind to me, and I cannot speak too gratefully of her.'

'That's good. Try to regard her as a mother, and not in any other light. Is she middle-aged?'

'Oh Lord, no! She says she is not much older than I am. She was only twenty when she married Atlee. But let's talk about something else. Tell me a little about your journey, how you are going to get from here to Australia?'

So they talked of the Malay Islands and the wonderland through which Rupert was to pass. Two days afterwards Meredith caught his steamer going on the return journey to Madura.

Then a Dutch steamer took Rupert and Holroyd on to Achin, on the north end of Sumatra. Here

there was a native situation of some tenuity, wherein Rupert felt that the less he interested himself, the better. But there were mountains not far away to the south which seemed to reach a great height. The steamer was going on to George Town in British Malaysia, but was returning to Ache or Achin in ten days' time. So Rupert thought he would take advantage of this lull to make an expedition through the forests and ascend Mount Luseh. Its height should be between twelve and thirteen thousand feet, and on its treeless summit was said to live a large, goat-like animal resembling a chamois.

I do not think he secured a specimen, but he and the still rather dysenteric Holroyd made some wonderful botanical collections, caught butterflies, and shot rare birds and some forms of little-known deer.

Then the steamer picked them up and carried them on to this place and that, of thrilling interest, until they were landed at Batavia, the capital of Java.

Then a short rest, an opportunity to Holroyd to get well whilst Rupert the untirable went off to see the Botanic Gardens at Buitenzorg under the leadership of the nicest and kindest of Dutch doctors of science he had ever met—and that particular brand and breed is very kind to a brother scientist. With this leader Rupert arranged almost tremulously a really pious expedition, equivalent in the Middle Ages to some hazardous, life-threatening, venturesome journey to the shrine of St. Iago de Compostela in the Galician wilds. This was a trip to the broadest part of narrow

Java, where in a stream valley had been found, several decades earlier, the first remains that could truly be called a 'missing link.'

'I have not—what shall I say?—a motor, an automobile yet,' said Dr. Moffenland, the Keeper of the great Botanic Gardens at Buitenzorg. 'I expect to get one very soon; but meantime I will drive you round Batavia in my pony-carriage.'

A smart little turn-out drove up whilst he was speaking. It was upholstered in brown, and was drawn by two Java ponies and driven by a Javanese coachman. They got in and bowled away down the beautifully gravelled drive with its superb palms and fig trees. Then out through the gates along broader traffic ways. As they passed westward along a rather crumbling low wall of a plantation, Rupert tried to see something of what lay behind the wall.

'That,' said his companion, 'was once quite a nice estate, flourishing. It belonged to Mijnheer Brandes. His widow married *en secondes noces* a countryman of yours—a captain from the Indian army—Fazakerly, his name was. I did not like him, ever. He was too alcoholic, and he died last year of the effects. I think the plantation is now for sale, and the woman is going back to the Netherlands.'

Rupert took very little interest further in the question, though the name 'Fazakerly' stuck in his retentive memory. Then the pony-carriage stopped outside some other wonderful plantation which had

within its limits amazing botanical curiosities and an orderly little menagerie of Javanese beasts.

At the post office in Batavia he found just arrived his wife's first letter, sent on from Ceylon. He tore it open and read it with avidity. But only the closing passages are available for quotation.

'Clarry has been over for the day from her gorgeous house at Hampstead. She has rather lost her supreme good looks of old (I thought, but of course did not tell her so). She had some trouble or complication over her confinement, though the child does not seem to have suffered thereby. But she has been slow in picking up. Everything that money could provide has been done for her, so I believe she will soon be all right again. She finds herself unable to nurse the baby—that is one of her troubles; but they are substituting for its natural nourishment the most elaborate preparations of cow's milk. I think a doctor or an analytical chemist has been specially engaged to reside there for six months to prepare them. At any rate, as I told her in consolation, the child *looks* well enough, and not having to nurse him frees Clarry from a constant engagement to her child.

'Most writers seem to me never to take this into consideration. I, as you know, wanted to be natural and to suckle my children right through from the first, till it was safe for them to eat cooked food. But I know what a slavery it has been; how I have been unable to go anywhere on more than an hour's visit. I must have the constitution of a horse to

have been able to stand up against bad nights and the four or five adjournments daily from the sitting-rooms where one receives society to the night or day nursery. I have loved the children so dearly that I record this half in fun, but it has made me feel very prehistoric. How the two or three millions of poor married women in London manage to wash and dress their babies, cook their husband's dinner and supper, make the beds, clean the house, and yet nurse their children regularly, I cannot imagine. Of course, I know nowadays many of them don't, but try to rear their offspring on Swiss milk or something of the sort; and that our infant mortality is therefore about twice what it should be. Still, I think a majority of them try to suckle their infants. It seems to me a curiously antique phase, for which a cure, a remedy, a substitute will soon be found somewhere—first in the United States, I should think.'

We cannot spend our time minutely following all the wonders that Rupert saw in Java. It will be sufficient to reiterate that he wished to wind up his fortnight in the island by a pilgrimage to its most famous site, the home—once—of the Missing Link. This meant a circuitous railway journey, almost the whole length of Java, from Batavia to Surabaya; and then from Surabaya they had to drive in a mule-cart northward and westward to the Solo River, and some distance up that stream to the hamlet of Trinil. On the eastern side of the river was the famous site where the Dutch surgeon had dug and

had discovered the famous skull-case, the teeth, and the limb bones of a being midway between an anthropoid ape and Man in its development. The site of the discovery had long since been ransacked, excavated, and meticulously searched by German scientists, and no further remains of the Missing Link had been discovered. But Rupert remarked to his host and conductor, the great botanist, there ought to be erected here, by international subscription, a suitable memorial.

Then he picked up a convalescent Holroyd and all his heavy baggage, embarked in another Dutch steamer, visited this, that, and the other enchanting Malay island with mountains, forests, and the sea, enormous lemurine fruit-bats at dusk and dawn, and marvellous fruits—durians, coconuts, mangoes, bananas, pineapples, loquats; with paroquets and lories of unimaginably beautiful colours, amazing pheasants, paradise birds like fantastic toys, fruit-pigeons of grass-green, of peach-mauve, the tenderest rose-colour, cobalt blue, and ruddy brown; and human natives that were neat Javanese, Bornean Dayaks, or fuzzy-haired Papuans, some that had a dash of the Polynesian or of the Negroid pygmy. There were islands bearing Portuguese names, though the Portuguese had long since faded away, or were only to be seen in two or three fever-stricken individuals on the eastern end of Timor; there were giant cassowaries, dangerously tame, awaiting shipment to a Dutch zoological gardens; further east, there were one or two specimens of babirusa pig

bristling with almost impossible tusks, being shipped to some direction of the Queen of Holland's. At some eastern ports were pretty cages made of palm shreds and containing pink-plumed paradise birds, so fantastic in the development of these plumes that you could not believe them to be living creatures. There was just a glimpse of New Guinea at its most Papuan, with a precious hint, through a rare lifting of the clouds, of snow peaks, when the Charles Louis Alps were briefly visible. Then at last the Torres Straits were passed, a tiny island-port was called at, and the steamer's voyage ended at Cook Town.

Here they were almost as much within the limits of respectable eighteenth-century traditions as anywhere else in Australia, for Cook Town had been discovered by Captain Cook when his vessel, the *Endeavour*, had been nearly smashed to pieces on a reef.

Rupert had now been four months out from England, and felt rather a guilty sense of having frittered away much of his time on business outside his Australian interests. Moreover, he was much without news of his wife and family, having only communicated with them by cable from Batavia. But he had had the forethought to mention Cook Town as a place of call, and there he got a satisfying message. A brief halt at this place was of great interest because he saw for the first time really tropical Australia, grasped at its needs, its ambitions, its labour questions—could they do without the Kanaka labour? Then he continued his voyage to the port of Brisbane.

And here he stayed long enough to receive a second letter from his wife:

'Darling Rupert,—My first letter was addressed to you in Ceylon—Post Office, Colombo; but I expect you went on before it reached you. You acknowledged one I sent to Batavia, with your fascinating account of your journey to the Solo River, and the place where the skull-cap of the Missing Link was discovered. I am addressing this letter, according to your directions, to the Post Office at Cook Town.

'I won't waste letter space or try your heart too much by repeating my laments and anxieties over your absence. I know you want to make our financial position firm and sound in every way, but I hope never again in our married life shall we have to be separated like this. Next time you go to Australia or to the South Pole or Equatorial Africa, I shall go with you, even if we have to leave the children behind. As to the dear children, there is fortunately not much to tell you. You have only been gone three months, and their lamentations *à ton égard* nearly ceased within a week after your departure. Rupert is now nearly six, and his thoughts are mainly fixed on his new rocking-horse: he wants to make it go by steam! Sara thinks of little else than food—I have to restrict her severely as regards chocolate creams and confectionery—Dr. Breslau says that the cream part of chocolate creams is not at all wholesome for female stomachs. If you care to know why, I will ask him to give his chemical reasons. Baby

thinks about very little except dogs, of which he is inordinately fond. I think if I told him that an uncle or an aunt was dead, he would simply say whatever is equivalent in baby language to "Just so," and search for a puppy to hug.

'Well, then, as regards the family outside this house, I have had a visit from Donald, with mixed results as regards satisfaction about his getting on. It was a relief to Mother, however, that he should come here and pay me a visit. Mother goes on for a little while longer living at Toomyvara. Nenagh—I mean Charles—it seems so formal now to call him "Tipperary"—I suppose we shall most of us go on with the old name or relapse into "Ninnie"—Well, then, Nenagh has been quite kind to Mother, and pressed her to think of making no other home outside Toomyvara. I think, however, her gorge still rises inopportunely at having to regard her former housemaid as her hostess. Aunt Charlotte has quite fallen in with the new situation, and calls her Luce like her husband does; but I understand that Mother on the plea of ill-health, and not having yet quite recovered from Father's death, lives in the suite of rooms we used to occupy, and keeps herself for the present quite in retirement.

'Luce has been over here, since her baby was weaned, on a second visit, and a short one, chiefly connected with shopping; but you know I felt very like Aunt Charlotte; she was quite easy to get on with—quite easy, and even rather appealing. For the first day or two I continued rather stiff, and had to school my

tongue to say "Lucy, dear" without a hitch; but when she had been here about two days, I saw her do something so uncommonly kind to one of the children that I melted. She looked round as she turned away from the child, and saw my face. Instinctively she opened her arms and we embraced with fervour and without further explanations. Since that we have got on together without a hitch. When the five days' shopping were completed, I saw her off at Paddington, and begged her always to look upon Sussex House as her home in London. I think she is going to have another baby. At any rate the first one flourishes.

'Nenagh is enormously wrought up, now he has got his telescope re-installed—and permanently so—over the extraordinary behaviour of one of Jupiter's satellites. It seems to be going the reverse way round Jupiter to what the other satellites do, which is most disturbing—so disturbing, he tells me, that no serious astronomer nowadays takes any interest in politics or the change of ministry.

'Well, I began this long passage about Donald and drifted off to his mother and brother. He is becoming very good-looking, and now that all the trouble about his nose glands is over he no longer keeps his mouth open. Father died before he could be fitted with any career. As you may remember, he simply could not pass any examination to get into the Army or any public service, however physically fit he might be. Well, Nenagh thinks now he might be trained to manage the estate at Toomyvara,

because Sergeant Crommelin will before very long want to retire.

'Branksome, fortunately, seems to be doing very well in Egypt. His appointment, I am afraid, was rather a job, because his knowledge of Arabic was very slight—in fact, I cannot think how he passed the test of the examination. But Lord Cromer seems to have taken rather a liking to him—there is no doubt we *are* an attractive family!—and so do the Egyptian officials. So I hope Branksome may make his way, and at any rate cause *us* no anxiety.

'Your sister Peggy is now a full-blown Suffragette—as they call them. I wonder when you will see Janet, and whether you will think she is happy. And what about Justy? Now I have written enough, I hope, to relieve your mind of anxiety.—Your doting wife,

'ADDIE.'

Rupert's arrival at Brisbane brought him back almost with a disagreeable shock to the contemplation of personal interests and mining affairs. On the outskirts of Brisbane he realized that his sister Janet was living with her husband and family, her husband, Joseph Jolibert, being the principal representative in the Queensland capital of the Borderland Mining Company. Rupert had to pull himself together, once again take cognizance of Holroyd's health; dismiss Wallace and the Malay Archipelago, New Guinea, Halmahera, North Queensland, and Captain Cook from his mind; and face the knotty business before him of a thorough inquiry into the

affairs of the company and a stringent consideration of its personnel. Jolibert was his brother-in-law, but even Jolibert, if there seemed any defect in him, must go, rather than that the company and the shareholders should suffer.

However, this stringent alternative had not to be enforced. Rupert was landed with Holroyd and his luggage at the Brisbane wharves. He hied him next to the best Brisbane hotel—not a bad one—had in the afternoon a good Turkish bath at the Brisbane 'Hammams,' had his hair cut, was carefully shaved, changed into thoroughly smart clothes, and followed up the telegram announcing his arrival (which he had despatched on landing) by driving up in Queensland's first taxi to Jolibert's address.

Although Janet had seen the telegram three hours before and had been distractedly awaiting him ever since, the sight of her brother—lean, tanned, and a little tired-looking—almost sent her off into hysterics. But she controlled herself, controlled her desire to kiss and hug him in the presence of the smiling Holroyd, and went on to say that Joe was away up country and would not be back for a day or so, though she had telegraphed the news of her brother's arrival.

So Rupert on the morrow had one day of really delicious rest and recuperation in the pretty bungalow of the Joliberts. He was the centre of intense interest to his nephew and his two nieces. The nephew wanted to grow up and have nothing to do with the mines, become a working naturalist. In his eyes, the

Malay Archipelago, as described by Wallace and H. O. Forbes, seemed the centre of the world's fascination. He wanted (I think he has since done so) to explore New Guinea, Halmahera, and Celebes, and his mother had to intervene at times to check his exuberant questioning.

However, two days afterwards Jolibert arrived, almost panting with the hurry with which he had effected his return from a tour of exploration on the New South Wales boundary.

The outcome of the week during which Rupert stayed with him allayed any doubts he may have felt. The northern part of the company's business at any rate was making good and safe progress.

Here, before leaving, he received a third letter from Addie:

'Darling,—I was very glad to get your letter posted at Batavia, and to learn about your pilgrimage of piety to the place where the Missing Link was discovered.

'Our little Rupert has had an attack of whooping-cough, caught, I suspect, from some other perambulator in the Park, but is almost convalescent, and I have managed to keep the others uninfected. We have had a visit from Mother, which I have quite enjoyed, because I felt it was doing her good. I find from one source and another that she will have about two thousand a year for the rest of her life; so I said to her when she was rested, and we could talk

expansively, "Why do you not look for a quiet, not too large house somewhere on the verge of Regent's Park, if you like to be near us? Rupert and I"—I went on—"are devoted to Toomyvara and to Ireland, but it must feel to you very lonely now that Father has gone, and that you are living there as a Dowager. Toomyvara is Aunt Charlotte's genuine home. It would not only be cruel to turn her out of it, but it would have a bad effect on the place. She gets on so perfectly with Lucy, and I can only hope they will have the good sense to make it worth her while to stay, if only as a kind of unacknowledged housekeeper. But with you, it is different. You will like to go over once or twice a year and pay them a visit and see your grandchildren; but why not do as we have done—make your home in London? And if you make it near us you won't be lonely, and you say you like our children rather better than other descendants. They are becoming terribly spoilt, and I hope you won't add to the spoiling, but they have already taken a liking to you, and whilst Rupert is away your being close at hand will help me—enormously."

'Well, she quite sprang to the suggestion, so now we are strolling about the Park every day, looking out for a possible settlement, if not in Hanover Terrace, at any rate somewhere else on the west, south, or east side of the Park. Mother had thought rather sniffily of this part of London till she saw what we had made of Sussex House, and until she realized that the largest of the three great properties

—curiously private as they seemed in a public park—belonged to the Duke of Merioneth. She takes a great interest in him. His surname, after all, is only Pryce, and she says that the Pryces and the Parkynses both originated in Wales in Tudor times. Perhaps on this account, as I think you know, Charles—it seems absurd to go on calling him "Nenagh"—has not let the ramshackle farm he owns in Radnorshire, but is talking of doing it up and calling it by its old Welsh name, which was Plas y Something-or-other, and going there to live occasionally. Indeed, when he last wrote to me he suggested *we* might go and stay there whenever we liked when you come back; and if we do not want to feel under an obligation, we could occasionally have him and Lucy up to stay, if he was obliged to come to London.

'Now I must finish my letter to you and attend to other correspondence. I have got Donald here on a visit, and I am trying to put a little sense into his mind, and am also very proud of having taught myself to typewrite.—Ever your loving wife,

'Addie.'

'Sussex Lodge,
'Regent's Park, 20*th October* 1906.

'Dear Madam,—I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 15th. My husband, as you seem to be aware, is still absent in Australia, but I hope to have him back here next year, and I will put before him, when he returns, your proposition that he and I should join the "Australian Society." I think that name is

altogether preferable to "Antipodean," which the Society was first called when it started in 1900. I do not know why, but the Antipodes, "Antipodean," always seems to suggest to the English people something slightly ridiculous, as though it were funny to be turned upside down and looked at that way. "Australian" is much more sensible.

'I gather that you are Australian born, but have come to London with your uncle, the Agent-General. I am sorry to learn that you are a widow. I was out in New South Wales for nearly two years, when my father went there as Governor.—Yours very truly,

'Adeliza Cuthbertson.'

'There, Donald. I think that will do,' handing him her letter to read.

'Good heavens! Do you typewrite? I heard a machine going whilst I was reading the paper. I had no idea you had learnt anything so practical.'

'Hadn't you? But you see I have. My going out to Australia taught me a lot of things I might never have picked up in sleepy old Ireland. I have such a vast deal of correspondence to keep up whilst Rupert is away, that I bought a typewriting machine and installed it here. It is cheaper than a secretary, whom I thought I should have to maintain. You can use one, I suppose?'

'N-no. 'Fraid I can't, though I suppose I could soon learn. But I simply can't stick writing letters. I don't mind what I do to and with a horse.'

'Well, dear old boy, I am afraid you are very old-

fashioned. You will soon be out of the running altogether. Motors and mechanical inventions are rapidly taking the place of horses, and unless we begin to eat horse-flesh—I suppose we do already without knowing—they will soon only be bred as a fancy article to encourage betting. . . . Not that we were not grateful for them in Australia—I rode and rode and rode there, and I dare say I should be riding here in the Park if I were not bearing children. . . . However, we must not waste this beautiful morning in foolish speech. You go out to the Natural History Museum, and be back punctually at one o'clock for lunch. Try to take an interest in minerals: they have got a superb collection. But at the very worst you can learn a lot about the anatomy of the horse. At any rate you cannot get into mischief there. There is no nice-looking girl amongst the waitresses, and you won't want refreshments before lunch. Be *punctual*, because I am going to take you to a matinée.'

CHAPTER XI

ROBERT HOLROYD AND KUNAPIPPI

BUT one source of uneasiness remained: Broken Hill developments. The Broken Hill mining discoveries were being actuated mainly from South Australia and Victoria. The white population there was steadily increasing. Mining prospectors from that centre were ranging northward, north-eastward. Only the excessive barrenness, drought, violent winds, terrible sand-storms were checking the advance of mining prospectors towards the regions which Rupert's company looked to as their rightful limit of extension and exploration. Rupert felt that his own task could not be completed until he had visited the neighbourhood of Mt. Lyell in the very north-westernmost corner of New South Wales. If he could get through, could find great wealth in gold or silver-lead or platinum and opals, and secure it for his company, and in addition satisfy himself that the whole scheme of management, working, and control could not be bettered, he would have done his utmost. He would not seek to amass a romping fortune for himself and his heirs; but if he could only secure a substantial benefit for their hundred best workers and their hundred thousand shareholders, then at the end of another ten years he could retire from the business altogether and live out the rest of his life with his wife and family in England.

He was taking with him Holroyd, on this last long

journey, though Holroyd now from some unexplained cause began to look quite different from the always cheerful factotum at Sussex House and the contented husband of Élise. His face was lengthened and drawn, and he looked ten years older than when he had quitted England.

Another member of the party would have probably interested you and me even more. This was 'Kunapippi,' an aboriginal Australian who had attached himself to Rupert's person at one of the coast towns. Holroyd, always good-natured, and now often feeling strangely ill, gave every one the credit on first acquaintance of being 'all right,' and Kunapippi's deft assistance in blacking boots and running errands was welcome, especially as his presence amused their master and often called up a smile on his rather weary face. Holroyd had a vague remembrance of first seeing Kunapippi, or Peter Jackson, as he was always called, in some coast town —Rockerville? Rupert had intervened with considerable decision of manner between Peter Jackson and a sullen-looking, threatening employé of the Borderland Mining Company who had a rum sort of name, 'Fazakerly,' or something like it. Fazakerly always seemed to be down on the Australian blacks and the Kanaka labourers—coloured people generally. Holroyd was too seedy to inquire why; but he had joined his master in championing this particular black man, who, he was told, was a runaway mission boy. His extraordinary garbled English was a mixture of frightful oaths, shocking obscenities,

and scarcely distinguishable gabble, all uttered with a smile, which displayed a range of large but perfect white teeth. The fact that he could utter unblushingly (though he was too dark in skin colour to show a blush) the most shocking expressions and look all the time perfectly innocent of having said anything in the least improper, raised a smile even on Holroyd's lips, from which the healthy English red had faded.

'Dearest Wife,' wrote Rupert when he had been away about six months, 'I have about now got into touch with the whole situation. The sum total is not so bad; I mean, it might have been very much worse. One of our best men has died, another has married and returned to England, and a third has rather callously abandoned our service, without proper notice, and has plunged far northward into the Artesian Basin, where he will find no gold, and I should think no minerals of any description. Our great wealth, as you know, is derived from silver-lead, platinum, copper, and occasionally finds of opals. We have a good deal of gold in one or two places well inside the fertile area of N.S.W. However, when I have got everything straight again as to management and staff, I want to go off on an adventurous tour of my own in the direction of what is called Broken Hill. I have heard some wonderful stories from a broken up, broken-down, battered type of pioneer who remembered me of old days. It appears I was once kind to him, and, in a rather drunken, hazy way, as he believes he has ruined most of his

own interests and prospects in life, he wants to give me as clear a sketch as he can turn out from his dazed brain whereabouts his discoveries were made, in the hope that I shall locate them. So—saying little or nothing about it to my fellow-workers here—I am going off on this adventurous journey with Holroyd as soon as I can. I hate these mysterious and secret plans; but if you are too outspoken and confiding you find yourself constantly tricked and superseded. . . . I am truly glad to hear you are getting stronger, and that family news is fairly cheerful. . . .'

The remainder of this letter would be of little interest to quote further. Rupert seems to have taken it with him to be posted at a place some forty miles from the town where it was written. He may have been a little anxious as to whether any one over-read his correspondence. . . .

A month after it had been written, he had got all the affairs of the mining company satisfactorily settled at its three principal centres, and considered he had earned a holiday, which he proposed to spend in the way he had confided to his wife. Armed with letters of introduction, he was to direct his course first to a railway station about two hundred miles inland from the coast, where he would present an introductory letter to a man who was farming on a very big scale, George Scatterson.

They reached Mr. Scatterson's house one day at sundown. All its surroundings looked orderly,

prosperous, almost ornamental, as though some conscious attempt had been made to improve the landscape. There were no high hills, but there were rolling downs, and a distant view westward over the Darling Valley, a view which provided many a varying landscape of colour—blue water, golden fields, sandy slopes, pink with the sunrise or sunset, enormous masses of yellowish-grey sheep, little groups of horses, flocks of turkeys, geese, ducks, and fowls in the foreground. If you looked at the landscape with a discriminating eye and a clear sight, you could distinguish knowing fences which were supposed to check the wanderings of rabbits, and if you moved amongst the poultrymen you would hear many a story of a fox's ravages; yet the foxes had to be endured, mitigated occasionally by a wild fox-hunt, because they kept down the rabbits. Here the fox seemed to be prospering so remarkably and growing so increasingly bigger in each succeeding generation that he might scale the Dingo in course of time; only the Dingo was now little heard of in these parts, except as an ancient curiosity.

After a rest here of three days, they left the Scattersons' place quite early in the morning, the twilight of the dawn even, before sun-up, to ride as far westward as they could, and rest and retire into tents when the sun got blazingly hot.

'It seems to me,' said Rupert, 'as though we were living at the very end of a passing age. We ought not any longer to have to ride these great distances

on horseback: we ought to be able to cover the ground in a motor.'

'Then why don't you settle down here for a bit and wait till we can produce a motor?' said Scatterson, who was seeing him on his way.

'Because it is just the waiting I cannot afford to do. I have been this way once before—long ago—and my ideas have ripened. I think I am going to make great discoveries in one or two places, if I can get there before any one else equally knowing. There are very few other persons in Australia that I could say this much to, excepting yourself. In the first place, I trust you as I have trusted few other men. In the second, all your ambitions lead you in another direction, where you will probably end by making far more money than I shall—sheep, agriculture. Now I must not hang about, and there is no reason you should waste your time coming with me any further. I will keep you advised of what happens to me, and you will know that I have a thoroughly trustworthy follower in Holroyd—I might even add, in our "blackie." He 's certainly the most intelligent "aboridge" I have ever met. Good-bye, dear chap, and thank you most awfully for all you have done for me. Corsedd will meet me the other side of the Darling.'

They clasped hands, and Scatterson turned his horse's face eastward towards his home. Rupert rode on towards the west, catching up Holroyd, who was a little in advance. Further in front was the aboriginal, Kunapippi, or Peter Jackson, as the

Aussies preferred to call him. Kunapippi was also on horseback, but he was driving along in front of him half a dozen mules heavily but compactly laden with necessaries for the expedition—tents, mattresses, provisions, implements for research, and what not else. . . . His English required severe and constant watching. He was very voluminous in speech, but reckless as to pronunciation or the choice of words. He had learnt no improprieties at the missionary school, but the rough white colonists amongst whom he had moved had delighted to teach him a variety of obscenities, which he had retained in his memory, unconscious very often of their exact meaning; and Rupert had to be constantly on the watch to nail down such words—so to speak—on the counter, and order him to excise them from use.

Kunapippi was not, of course, really black in skin colour. At most and at the darkest, he might be termed a rich brown, like some polished timber of the tropics. He seemed in his boyhood to have come from some native camp in the vicinity of which Jim Corsedd, the old Cornishman, had made his discoveries. Apparently he had been brought away by a missionary, to whom he had fled for protection in some native quarrel. The missionary had placed him at his school, near the Queensland frontier. There he had learnt many things—amongst others, to keep his hair moderately cropped and tidy, his face and body regularly washed; he had learnt to read, and even to do some writing; and he had acquired an alarming fluency in the New Testament.

When he had reached, however, the age of about seventeen or eighteen, he was seized with ungrateful restlessness, probably some undefined sex trouble. At any rate, after absenting himself for two days, seven days, a month, without permission, he had at last boldly left the mission station, and travelled on a variety of odd jobs till he reached Rockerville, where he had run up against Rupert. To the face, the tone of voice, the manner of this Englishman he had taken an extraordinary liking. Rupert had looked at him with interest, inquiring as to what he was, and apparently valuing him all the more when he learnt he was an 'aboridge'; so Kunapippi, who up till then had been known as Peter Jackson, being pressed by Rupert to reveal his native name, had admitted it, and then had attached himself to this kindly Englishman, almost uninvited. Rupert had raised no objection to his furtive presence, assisting in his kitchen, running errands for Holroyd and any other servants. He gradually grew accustomed to glance on his lithe, deft form, clad in an apology for blue breeches, the cast-off of some footballer. He noticed that his body where it was naked showed no traces of the hideous cicatrices, the gashes, swellings, and blodges of raised skin, which mask the bodies of most of the adult males among the Australian aborigines. This Kunapippi had escaped by missionary intervention and capture, and missionary teaching had developed his intelligence to almost a remarkable degree. If he wanted any further warranty, he met his master's eye with such a whole-hearted

smile of greeting, showing such white, perfect teeth, that Rupert required no written character. He might quite possibly have been a thief in other circumstances. So, he believed, in the far past of the tramp-steamer days, might Holroyd have degenerated; instead of having in ten years achieved savings from mining discoveries which must have brought him in an income of some five hundred pounds a year, over and above the wages he received as coachman, butler, and factotum. It was only something in Rupert's nature which appealed to both of them: they would really be true to death.

'Holroyd! If your dysentery has come on again you are not fit for this journey. I will leave you behind here till I return. These people will be awfully kind to you, and when you get quite well you can make yourself useful till I am back. I will take Kunapippi with me, and Corsedd will meet me across the Darling; and perhaps I can secure some tough white man on the estate whose services Mr. Scatterson will lend me for a time.'

'No, sir; *no*, sir; I entreat you. I believe it would kill me to be left behind, and the dysentery will soon go off once I get a-ridin' and sleepin' out in the bush, in the dry weather.'

There was such a pathetic appeal in his eyes that Rupert's heart smote him. The absence of this man would mean a frightful loneliness, for Rupert felt chary of talking as freely to any unknown white man who might be with him. He yielded, and said nothing

further to prevent his packing and starting with him across the broad Darling River.

Three days later they had reached the vicinity of the Paroo River, where it was still a slowly flowing stream. Farther to the south-west it would cease to flow, save when it rose every seven years in flood; and would lose itself in the sand or nourish underground a few brackish lakes. This neighbourhood awakened Corsedd's memories. He walked alertly, dropping his weary slouch; and in his conviction that he was near the point of one of his old discoveries easily obtained the consent of the abstracted Rupert to absent himself for twenty-four hours to have a look round. At this camping-place they had reached the last sure and certain source of water before venturing north-westward into the absolutely unknown, the almost unmitigated desert. Holroyd had hardly been able to sit his horse to the end of this day's ride.

'Here you have got to lie up and stay till you get better,' said his master. 'In fact, I think here, even at the risk of arousing suspicion and attracting pestiferous followers, we had better stay till you turn the corner. Another day's ride like to-day's would simply kill you.'

With the help of the silent, pondering Kunapippi, he laid out the camp, erected the tents, and made two beds, just mattresses spread on the sandy ground over a waterproof sheet. On one of these Holroyd was placed, under a light covering—for it was very hot. After giving him medicine from the medicine

chest and attentively studying the manual before preparing the dose, Rupert next proceeded to prepare some invalid food recommended for sufferers from dysentery; later, with Kunapippi's help, got together some dinner for himself, the remains of which would feed the silent aboriginal. Then enjoining on the latter to keep awake on his spread blanket, watch the sick man, and arouse the master at any change or wakefulness of Holroyd, Rupert himself lay down in the other tent, and, though sick with anxiety and apprehension, fell at once asleep from fatigue.

He woke with a start at the dawn. Woke from a dream of Addie and his children, in the happy comfort and security of his London home. He was just saying to her—he dreamed—'I must call Holroyd and he will know—' Know what? The ghastliness of the awaking scene overwhelmed him—the dingy, stained, yellow-brown of the tent walls; he staggered in his out-door clothes—he had not changed into night-wear for several days—out of the tent and into Holroyd's: the morning air was quite cold, though the midday temperature would be overbearingly hot. . . . 'How is he?' he asked the just-awakened Kunapippi . . . 'He quite comferable, sah,' said the sleepy man, anxious to convey favourable information.

Rupert bent over the poor couch on which the sick man lay. It was little more than the camp mattress laid on a waterproof sheet on the smooth ground. To the mattress a bolster and a pillow were added. Robert looked like a ghost of his former self, dying

of a peculiar form of dysentery, generated here and there in the Darling Valley.

'Robert, old man,' said Rupert, kneeling down on one knee to get a better look at him, 'this is a sad business, a shocking bungle into which we have got ourselves. Why ever I ventured on this expedition, I cannot think, and I should have forced *you* to remain behind at Goombalie. In any case, you must go no further; nor will I, till you are distinctly better; and then I will send you back to Bourke or some place where you can be looked after.'

Robert pressed his hand weakly, and tears trickled out of his closed eyelids. Kunapippi had slithered into the tent and was now standing beside his master, looking down at the sick Robert. He had also brought into the tent a cup of some invalid food which he had learnt to prepare. Rupert, as he held the sick man's hand, was racking his brains to decide what further medicine he should prepare as a restorative, when he felt his hand squeezed with a sudden, spasmodic wrench. Between Robert's bloodless lips came the faintly uttered words:

'I 'd have followed you anywhere, master; you could not leave me behind.'

And a few seconds afterwards the light went out of his eyes, and he died.

When Rupert rose, almost staggered and stupefied by the catastrophe of the death, he felt some one was standing behind him. It was Jim Corsedd, who had returned from a day's rambling on his own account, fossicking for minerals. His hard, weather-beaten

face was alive, twisted, furrowed, wrinkled with contending emotions. Triumph of a kind shone from his eyes, not yet abated by any other consideration. Yet he realized that he was looking down on death, or at any rate a terrible swoon.

'This is a bad business, mate,' he said to Rupert, whom he always persisted in addressing as nothing but a comrade in research. 'Has he fainted . . . or . . . or . . . ?'

'He is dead, I fear,' said Rupert in a low voice. 'I never foresaw this could happen, that he was so bad with dysentery. I would have given thousands of pounds that it should not have happened. I ought to have made him stay behind at the Scattersons' till we returned. I shall never forgive myself for my want of thought, my hurry.'

'Well, I am awful sorry, but when we are sure he is downright dead, poor chap, the only thing will be to bury him. I don't suppose you want his body carried back, and I suppose we are not going back this very moment before we 've finished our search. I have got some rare good news for you when you can bear to hear it; rare good news. I believe I have discovered a fortune for you and me too, and any one else you like to give a bit to. But that won't be much consolation to you at this time, 'cause I know you liked this poor chap, and he told me he had been with you for eleven or twelve years, and helped you make your first discoveries in Queensland. You are such a good-hearted chap you must feel his death pretty bad.'

. . . . . .

When all restoratives had failed to reveal any trace of life within the next two days, Rupert resolved that burial must take place, though he would endeavour so to mark the place of sepulture that it could be easily identified afterwards and be marked by a tombstone, or the coffin could be exhumed and transferred to a more regular cemetery, or even to England. Jim Corsedd was quite a good hand at carpentering. They opened boxes and stored the provisions in a cache where they could be preserved against their return. They had nails, hammers, and saws with them. At the end of two days the coffin was ready, and poor Holroyd's remains were interred under the largest eucalyptus tree near the camp, and all measures were taken for the after-identification of the place, including the cutting of initials on the tree trunk. In all this work Kunapippi helped as far as he was able, very silent, a little puzzled, but, like most of his race, impressed with the fact that a death had taken place, even though his sorrow and regrets for the dead man were of only a few days' duration.

On the fifth day of their stay all this work had been accomplished, and Rupert, with a very heavy heart, depressed, dejected as he had never felt before, set his face westward to reach his final destination.

He examined Corsedd's specimens before he left the camp, and had set out with an unsmiling face to visit the places where they had been found, some fifteen miles from the camp where Holroyd had died. They promised a region of such enormous mineral wealth that on the sixth day after Holroyd's death

he decided measures must be at once taken for the substantiating of his company's claim, and a further calling on the nearest of the mining company's stations in New South Wales, to send out a relief expedition along his track to take and secure possession of the new mineral discovery, and to follow him up to where he was now going and bear him back to safety if his health should break down. He would therefore send Corsedd back with his message with two horses and one mule, and he himself would pass on alone with Kunapippi to the final stage where Corsedd had reported great mineral wealth, at the very end of the Grey range of dwindling heights. All this was explained to Corsedd; who, elated at his wonderful discovery, sure of Rupert's honesty in seeing him adequately rewarded, provided with a small fortune to pass his declining years in comfort, was a different creature from the down-at-heel, drunken, dull-eyed loafer who had first attached himself to Rupert's fortunes. He was sorry for the boss, of course, over the death of Holroyd; but his sense of sorrow hardly survived the burial. After all, the boss was strong and fairly young, the husband of a great lady, and the father, he understood, of several children. If all went well he would leave Australia a rich or a very rich man, so what did the death of one of his companions matter?

They parted, therefore, at the site of Corsedd's discovery, the one to go westward and the other east.

CHAPTER XII

CARL FAZAKERLY

MEANTIME, or rather some six weeks before, Addie, all unconsciously in Regent's Park, had been typing one of her fortnightly letters to her husband.

'I have taken in your sister Peggy for a stay and a rest,' wrote Addie. 'I am really entertaining quite a number of friends and relations, partly to keep my thoughts off you. I see a good deal of the Worbarrows. They are both intensely interesting people as regards knowledge packed into their brains, and yet I feel they are rather unsolved riddles. I think it is rather a disappointment to them they have no children. Mrs. Worbarrow rather melted one day when she had had an afternoon with ours at the Zoo. She told me she had given birth to one child a year after she was married; but its coming had a good deal upset her anatomy, and the poor little thing had died when it was eighteen months old. Two years afterwards she had had a disappointment, a miscarriage; and then she had braced herself up and had decided to devote her energies to benefiting women in general, to get them the suffrage and other things she thought would be good for them.

'But, however, about Peggy: she too, I think, is sick in somewhat the same way. I always suspect women when they absolutely clamour for an independent life, no family ties, a position from which

they can benefit the whole human race—I always suspect them of a sex disappointment to start with. I wish, poor dears, they could have first of all been married and had one or two children, and then devote themselves in middle age to these public purposes. That—I cannot help thinking—is what is wrong with Peggy. However, by looking after her a little, making her take her breakfast in bed for three or four mornings, finding out the things she liked to eat, the plays she wanted to see, and humouring any inexpensive fancy she might have, I think I have quite won her over. She is still rather critical about you. She thinks you frankly a fool to leave me and go off to Australia, just to make yourself a little bit richer, instead of being contented with what you have got and settling down here by my side. I do not know whether she is right or wrong, but I try to persuade her that you were very disquieted—before you left—about what you had got, that your shares in the mining company might have seemed a great fortune when we married, but if they went down and down, and the whole thing came to grief, we might be reduced to live on the thousand a year you gave me. That rather silenced her; so later I expressed with full vigour the optimism induced by your later letters, and then I talked about Janet, and what you had done for her, and how you were going to see Justy. Peggy is leaving me at the end of next week, because she has to give a series of addresses on the Suffrage in the Midlands, beginning at Birmingham. She expects she is going to be very much knocked

about, but I hope she may be wrong. She speaks bitterly of Dorothy, and she has thought that Dorothy is so much wrapped up in Stephen and in her two boys, that she does not care if she gets the vote or not, and wishes Peggy would turn her thoughts to gardening or agriculture.

'Donald has gone back to Ireland, and I think and hope he is really going to settle down there and some day become agent to Charles—as we have decided to call Ninnie, now he is Lord Tipperary.'

Clambering up the telegraph pole with agility, Kunapippi cut the two wires by filing and snapping them. Soon after he had descended and was ranging the horizon to sight what he could, he discerned a form stumbling towards him through the mallee bush. He knew this to be Rupert, who presently stood upright as he entered the clearing of the camp. He offered no conversation—nothing but a dejected shaking of the head. Then he threw himself down on the blankets of his bed.

Days went by. Perhaps not more than two. Kunapippi roughly cooked a meal twice a day, very economical with the water which was so near exhaustion. Rupert ate but little, and in between his eating still fossicked amongst the mineral specimens he had collected from the rocks. Every morning the sun rose about five, blazed across the sky, and sank over the western horizon at seven. The horses were dead after a two days' tottering weakness. Rupert at last felt too weak, too hopeless to take

any further interest in anything. He rolled himself up in a blanket in the shadow of the tent and sank into a slumber.

On the fourth morning since he had cut the telegraph wire, Kunapippi went out again to prospect. In the far distance he saw something which brought back alertness to his frame and saliva to his thirst-parched mouth. Something far to the eastward that looked like white men riding. Presently there seemed a stir much nearer to him. He ran to meet it, and from the tangle of the mallee scrub emerged a white man—Carl Fazakerly—on the back of a very exhausted horse. He uttered an exclamation at the sight of the black man, began to comprehend he had probably arrived at the solution of the cut-wire mystery. He glanced around and sighted the clearing and the tent, strode to it rapidly, and took in everything, as he thought, with a glance or two: one white man, possibly Rupert, dead on his bed from thirst; or perhaps he had been killed by the Australoid for plunder? And here, facing him, was the Australoid, Kunapippi, his former enemy, the insolent brute raised up against him as a witness by Rupert's encouragement. He quickly made up his mind, and as he did so, Kunapippi, reading his thoughts, turned and fled, slithering westward into the scrub. But not too quickly or too far for Fazakerly to fulfil his intention of putting a bullet into him. He fired twice. The black man seemed to fall and ran no further.

The two reports of the gun awakened Rupert

from his semi-comatose condition. He rolled over on the bed, staring uncomprehendingly at the angry-looking white man. As he began to stammer out inquiries there were distant shouts. Fazakerly and Rupert for a moment or two stared into each other's eyes. Fazakerly was striving to pull his wits together and think of a clear line of conduct. He might even, if he could hit on a good way, take advantage of the minutes swiftly fleeting by before the rest of the party came up, kill Rupert, and fabricate a story of the black man having done so and been slain in his flight by the white avenger. But the element of indecision, the interval of time before he could decide on action, saved Rupert. The shouts of the rest of the party grew louder and louder as the shouters evidently guessed that here was the solution of the mystery, and as the hate faded from Fazakerly's eyes the camp was invaded by the three hearty Australians who were seeking for their disappeared employer. Rupert's head fell back as he dropped again into a comatose insensibility. Fazakerly, too, for appearances, at once occupied himself with the others to find restoratives and apply them.

At the end of three days Rupert was sufficiently recovered and restored to his senses and his memory to bestir himself. He addressed no word to Fazakerly, asked no question. He told the others of Kunapippi's devotion and his disappearance. One of them said :

'The very day I come up here I went all round

about the camp, searching, and at one place, not more than a hundred yards away to the west, I came across a place where some one had lain down and where there was some caked blood, only partly dried by the sun, and I found some other tracks and spots of blood going away to the west; but the ground was too hard for footprints. 'Spect your blackie made off in that direction. What had made him bleed?'

Rupert's two horses being dead, and the water supply of the relief party being insufficient for a longer stay, the white men in turns gave up the use of a horse to Rupert and rode doubly on the others. In four days, at this slower rate of travel, they reached Cambley's Station, which seemed a paradise in contrast to the hopeless desert they had quitted.

Carl Fazakerly, who here comes definitely into the story, was the child of a Dutchwoman in Java. She was the comparatively young wife of a rather worn-out, sparse-haired, very pale-blue-eyed, sallow-cheeked Dutch planter. Carl's real father had been taken to be, by all surrounding, a Captain Fazakerly, a vinous, brandified English officer in some vague regiment on the borders of the fighting line; who, on retiring to become a planter in Burma, was allowed to retain the title of Captain. Captain Fazakerly had got into trouble some forty years before over procuring a Burmese girl to satisfy his lusts. Nothing very much happened to him afterwards, through the indulgence or limpness of the local Government

official; but such public opinion as there was round about Tenasserim made things sufficiently uncomfortable for him to move in some other direction. He came consequently to Java, and settled in the cotton plantation next to that occupied by the Brandes couple. He soon pressed his attentions on the rather heart-sick, lonely Mevrouw (Mrs.) Brandes. As the result, in a year or two she gave birth to a boy, whom her husband languidly accepted as his own, and later on to two other children. When Brandes died his widow married Captain Fazakerly, and her three children took their supposed step-father's surname. . . .

Years afterwards, the eldest, Carl, wandered far afield through the Dutch East India Archipelago, getting here and there somewhat into trouble. At length he washed up in Queensland, and, on the look-out for a job in this, that, or the other direction, attached himself to Rupert's mining company.

There is a curious tendency in Dutch hybrids—half Dutch and half English—to display extraordinary harshness towards 'native,' non-European races. One has seen it in the three hundred years of South African history; in the eighteenth century, when Dutch, Scots, and English tried to develop in common the sugar lands of Guiana; here and there in the Malay Archipelago; and in West Africa. The unmixed Dutchman—very few of the Boers are that—on the other hand, may be a model of kind consideration towards Malay or Papuan; and the fact that he is often to be found living alone in a large

district, with no one to protect him from native assault but a handful of native police, testifies amply to the affection he has inspired.

Rupert, at last, after these harassing months of despair and achievement, his discovery of Arabian Nights riches, marred by the death of a friend he had never expected to see die, tasted happiness as he sat up in bed at the Scattersons'; recovering almost miraculously, as he deemed it, from sprains and strains, injuries outside and inside. How long had he been here? It seemed like months. There were letters, quite a number of home letters, too, on a little table by his bedside. Addie's handwriting had addressed three of their envelopes, yet they were so far unopened. Addie? In his hazy recollection he had been attended for weeks by Addie. . . . But of course not; that was a delusion. Kunapippi was with him again. He had not dreamt or imagined *that*; so he could not have run away or been killed. That, surely, was the top of his fuzzy head, outside the window? He must be seated on the verandah. Presently he would raise his voice and call for him, ask what had interrupted his service——

Who was the Addie who lurked in his thoughts? Not his wife? Of course not—it was the daughter of his host, Adelaide Scatterson. . . .

The sun streamed with increasing force on to the verandah, though blinds had been drawn to keep it off; but there came in pleasant sounds from the outside, distant choppings of an axe, cheery cries

and greetings in pleasant tenor voices, sufficiently subdued by distance to rouse no agitations. Ever and again he heard the eager yapping of an excited terrier dog, hoping to lure some human companion into a walk. Then uprose the voice of Mr. Scatterson, debating the fate of a fine fox, caught fast in some trap set for another creature, possibly for rabbits. The man he called his 'gamekeeper' was for killing the fox. He, on the other hand, was explaining that in the part of England where he had been brought up as a boy it was less of a crime to kill a human being than to slay a fox in cold blood and not at the end of a long pursuit with hounds. No, he would let the fox go, because it was a great ally in the war against the rabbits. It had probably blundered into this trap in pursuit of a rabbit. Never should a fox be slain on his estates till the curse of the rabbit had been lifted off Australia.

Other voices—bass, barytone, treble, tenor—joined in the discussion, till the object of the debate was evidently borne to a distance from the house, and the voices faded into the vague murmur of the outside at nine o'clock on this ardently sunny morning. A surge of sweet English recollections flooded Rupert's mind. At last the main difficulties were over; the Australian episode was ending in peace and happiness. He was recovering his health, his injured leg was actually painless; he tried to confirm this conviction by two or three movements under the bedclothes, which satisfied him that they were no longer painful.

Then the door opened with a click, and Adelaide in riding-dress was looking down on him. She was the very picture of buoyant health, yet as he looked up at her a dim vision of his wife seemed to pass between them. He checked himself as he was about to utter the all-too-familiar phrase, 'Hullo, Addie!' and lengthened the name into Adelaide.

She drew a chair to the bedside and sat on it, gently flicking her gaitered leg and her riding-breeches with her riding-whip.

'Ad-de-laide — no longer "Addie" — and home letters by your bedside. What does this mean? That you 're going to throw me over?'

'No, my dear child. I only remembered, looking up into your bonny face, that Addie, which I have evidently got into the way of calling you of late, in imitation of your father, was very specially my wife's name, and perhaps should be given to no one else by me. Dreadful to have to talk to you in this book fashion; but somehow this morning I feel so much more like getting well again that I have to remember that I am already a husband and a father, and must not get led away by your charms into invalid foolishness. I do not want ever a cloud to come between us, between the "Addie" over the water and you. I want you to decide to marry some one among your several lovers, and to come to my home in England to pay us a visit, and to be properly thanked there by my wife, my *dear* wife, for all you have done for me, you and your father.'

Adelaide looked at him fixedly as she tapped her

leg with the hunting-switch. A bright colour surged into her cheeks. 'I see,' she said. Then she burst into tears irrelevantly; then rose and turned her back, dabbing her eyes gently as she looked out of the window on to the verandah.

A painful minute passed. Then she turned round, her eyes sparkling with an unshed tear or two.

'They have let the fox go, I see! Now if you are so wonderfully better as you make out, why should not you dress in something—pyjamas and a dressing-gown, unless you feel fit enough to wear boots and criticize the flower garden—and go out of your bedroom for the better part of the day—and prepare by degrees to be strong enough to take the rail to Sydney, and go off home to your other Addie?'

'I will'; and then, after a moment's hesitation, he went on, 'Dear child—I really may call you that; your age, I imagine, is not much more than eighteen?—and *I* am beginning to get near forty——'

'Am I in for a lecture? If so, I will sit down.' She took a chair, and sat with her back to the verandah.

'Well, then, to finish up and start fair again,' said Rupert, 'why don't you cease playing with life, accept and marry one of your Australian suitors?—James Summers seems to me an excellent type of man, and he is evidently head over ears in love with you. Take him next time he proposes; marry and settle down, and make a great future for yourself.'

Adelaide did not reply at once; but she turned her bright eyes from gazing at him and bent them

obstinately on the ground. Then she lifted them once more, and it seemed again as though she looked out through a film of tears.

'I suppose I misunderstood,' she went on. 'I knew the first time you came you were rather a great person, but I was not sure you were married . . . or, like so many other Englishmen who come out to Australia, I thought you might have run away from your wife, to make a fresh start out here. But I will put all such silly thoughts out of my head now . . . now that I realize that it is the very reverse. . . . I have always wanted to marry an Englishman. . . . Can't say why. Australian men seem to me so ordinary. . . . They are all right in emergencies, riding about desperately, shooting each other or natives, turning a herd of wild horses, or rounding-up cattle. There are times, then, when I admire them. But you can't spend your married life in one crisis after another. And when you settle down at home, perhaps without even the electric light we have got here, and try to be intellectual and think about world problems—why, they are nowhere. They want to puff a pipe and to read some rotten weekly paper. I suppose I ought not to have gone away to school at Sydney. There I used to read Scott's novels—they must have been written eighty or ninety years ago—and I always wanted to marry a Guy Mannering when I grew up,' and she looked down again, and a tear or two dripped over her tanned cheeks.

Rupert was turning over in his rather puzzled brain, from which he was pushing on one side faint

delusions remaining after his illness. He was just going to speak when again she raised her head and said :

'But all this is very bad for an invalid, to have an unwanted proposal of marriage which he cannot accept!' And she wrung out a little laugh. Then she rose from her chair, touched his forehead lightly in passing, and said, 'There is no fever about you this morning, that 's clear. Get up, put on any sort of dress, and come out on the verandah. You may be strong enough to limp round to our out-of-doors eating-room, and have your midday meal with us outside. I won't bother you any more during your stay, I promise you.' Then she flicked him a kiss and left his room.

When Rupert was well enough to leave Mr. Scatterson's farm, he went to Rockerville with the faithful Kunapippi in attendance for a final visit of circumspection before—and his heart thumped at the prospect—before joining his home-going steamer at Sydney. He had already booked his passage, two months ahead. Several points had to be considered, and their settlement irked him. It was an increasing strain each time to school his mind, his tongue, or his pen to deal with these settlements. It was becoming increasingly difficult to him to intimate to Mr. A that he was a rogue, though he had not been clearly found out, and that the company would be glad to terminate his employment, and would do so with payment of three months', six months', twelve months' salary.

One question he felt he must settle before he left for England and, he hoped, for peace and quiet and the dealing with troubles which were not troubles in comparison with these Australian issues : these long, fatiguing journeys with their occasional blinding sand-storms, coarse food badly cooked, coarse drinks badly prepared. He was becoming too middle-aged for these trials, few of which would have grated on him in the last years of the nineteenth century. He must, however, try to solve the Fazakerly trouble before he left Australia, even if he paid the man off handsomely and got rid of him on friendly terms. He would at any rate impose these terms on the Australian direction of the company.

It cost him a pang to leave the Scatterson establishment. There was something approaching English comfort here. Everything was clean, and much of it was comely. But it was imperatively necessary that he and Adelaide Scatterson should part before anything had occurred to spoil her life—or his. He had begun to think of her too often ; to recall the look of her rounded arms when she was in the nearest approach to evening-dress that her life—out in the bush and always haunted by mosquitoes—permitted. Her eyes were her best feature ; her complexion a little too tanned for European fastidiousness—but he would not go on dissecting her in his mind. The farewell between them gave his heart more than one wrench, though she behaved quite ' properly.' Scatterson—good fellow !—was driving with him to the far-off railway station. Kunapippi rode on the box, beside

the rather scowlingly acquiescent white Australian driver, who, however, looked forward to the tip he would receive from the great man as some compensation for sitting next a black-fellow; and after all, the black-fellow, with his hair cut and oiled, his moustache clipped, his young beard shaved, and his face, from having been so often washed, quite sensibly toned down in colour, did not look so bad. If their eyes met and the coachman relaxed into a smile, the answering grin of Kunapippi quite reconciled the former to his proximity.

They reached the station at last after a twenty-five miles drive.

'Before you are out here again,' said Scatterson, 'I shall have a motor to do all this, and your journey to the new mines will seem quite out of date. You put it in, so to speak, quite at the end of a prehistoric epoch. We are beginning to guess about now that with motors of the right kind we shall be able to scoot all over Australia—cross the continent in four days, five days; run over to Palmerston or Darwin and catch the home-going steamer there; forestall that trans-continental railway they have got tired of talking about.'

'Yes, I dare say; but if we had not been forward in these matters, some one else would have forestalled me in the discoveries I have made. With the development of motor traffic Australia will go ahead by leaps and bounds. Well, Scatterson, our time together is coming swiftly to a close, but we are neither of us sentimental persons, and my tongue

seems clogged when I try to frame for your hearing suitable thanks for all you have done for me. But I do thank you from the bottom of my soul; and I do hope that I may be able to repeat these thanks more effectually if you will come and see me in England. Come and see us—and bring your daughter,' he added with just the slightest pause, 'and let my wife thank you. She will do it far more effectively than *I* can.'

Right hand extended to right hand and gripped. For one second their eyes met, and Rupert felt that his were bright with emotion. Then the wagonette rattled through the sketchy streets—terribly dusty with the last sand-storm—of Bourke. They rounded a very new-looking church, passed along an avenue of peach trees, and drew up outside Bourke station.

Five days afterwards Rupert was at Rockerville, at a not over-comfortable hostelry. But he preferred going to an inn to seeking hospitality at A's, B's, or C's quarters. It left him freer to effect his settlement.

After the first day or two he had a conclusive and businesslike talk with the hotel-keeper. Certain obtrusive and seemingly shiftless guests were bribed to go on their ways with their hotel bills settled by Rupert, their rooms vacated, cleaned, and handed over either to his use or at any rate to quiet. He thus secured the whole of the first story of the hotel —not more than five rooms; one of which he fitted

up as an office, another as a bedroom, a third as a bathroom. The end room of the series he gave to the use of Kunapippi, and the fourth room he fitted up as a museum, a place to store his collections. On the inside verandah which bordered the whole square of the inn there was a noteworthy collection of cockatoos, parrots, and piping crows. Some handsome flowering shrubs made the little garden quite pleasant; and so far from objecting to the birds' noise, Rupert assured the host that they added enormously to the charm of the lodging. He also felt, but did not say so, that they were an additional safeguard against obtrusive strangers at any time with evil purposes; for the birds were as sensitive to intrusion, especially of strangers, as the geese which saved the Capitol of Rome. His meals were sent up here from the kitchen, and were served by Kunapippi in the sitting-room. When he had dined with A and lunched with B, and had had several afternoon teas with Mrs. C, local opinion was quite placated.

But there always remained the question of Fazakerly. The man did not obtrude himself overmuch, at any rate in the first days. He worked diligently at his quarters in the mines office. But he was always there, obtrusively civil when they met, and his eyes—the expression of which few men or women can fully control—were always false. He seemed to be meditating on some plot he was fashioning in his mind. Within the first week he had called on Rupert with a proffer of his services if he could assist him in his

work or make him more comfortable, and on the occasion of his call he seemed obtrusively desirous of inspecting the quarters as they were being arranged at the hotel, and once or twice when Kunapippi emerged and showed him back to the sitting-room where Rupert was writing he glared at the 'blackie' in a way which aroused in the 'blackie's' mind the acutest suspicion.

'How did you get that blackie back with you,' he said to Rupert when he returned. 'I thought some of his black-fellow friends had done him in in the wilderness.'

'His life was attempted by some one,' Rupert replied coldly, 'but by some agility he avoided the two bullets fired at him, so that both only made surface wounds. He deemed it wisest to go off to some distant native encampment and have them treated there. A week afterwards he followed up our tracks and rejoined me at the Scattersons'. As my English servant Holroyd had died just before you got up with us, I thought I would keep on Kunapippi as my servant till I departed for England. He is one of the best fellows I ever met; and since he seems to interest you, I wish you would look on him with a more favourable eye—I cannot conceive his having injured you in any way, at any time—and not follow him about with such fierce looks. And remember also that—like all the blacks—he has his own name, which is Kunapippi. And now I am afraid I must ask you to leave me, as I have to go out and pay a call on Mrs. Carslake.'

Carl Fazakerly, looking additionally sulky, reluctantly withdrew. What he was wondering about all the time, so far as a novelist may presume to have read his brain, was where Rupert had stored his many specimens, the opals which Fazakerly believed him to have found, and the silver-tin samples, and anything else he may have brought away from the utmost point to which his expedition had reached. However, he must have patience. Mr. Cuthbertson would be here presumably for another six weeks. There were no signs of any collections or samples being kept in the room he used as an office.

So he strolled out, dismissing the scowl from his face, and making his way to the club for a cocktail.

On his reappearing at the mines office next morning he received a facer. The junior manager sent for him and said, 'Fazakerly, old man, you are fired. The boss thinks we have taken on too many men, and that he ought to cut down members of the staff who have served us less than twelve months. At any rate, it is not for me to discuss his reasons. Your name is on the list of those who have got to go—as pleasantly as possible. He does not want to deal hardly with any one, and so the three or four who have to quit will each receive six months' pay in advance, money enough to purchase a through fare to Hell or to start business afresh somewhere else. He has not told me *I* have got to go, but I should not be surprised. Well, I will make out your cheque, send it in to him to be signed, and then if you are sensible you will take it and go.'

Many emotions and suspicions assailed Fazakerly's mind, but he exerted all his mental force to suppress their exhibition in his face. He only said to the junior manager :

'All right, please yourself. I hope the boss will remember that I was with the party that came to his rescue ? '

'He never forgets anything, I think. Let 's see, what do you get ? Three hundred a year ? Well, here is a cheque for £150, which I am taking to him to sign.' He returned in two or three minutes, during which time Fazakerly's quick ears listened to hear any remarks that might pass, but heard nothing. He took the cheque, signed a receipt, delivered a mock military salute, and left the office ; left the office and entered the club, hate surging in his mind. He almost forced himself to be calm and think out his procedure very carefully. Whilst he was imbibing his cocktails, Rupert entered the club with another man, senior in service to the junior manager. He overheard Rupert say to his companion, 'Very well, then, I will dine with you here—with pleasure—and we will talk it over afterwards.'

That meant that Rupert would be absent from his quarters at the hotel from about seven o'clock to eleven. He probably would not stay up later. Therefore if Carl came to Rupert's quarters at the hotel between eight and nine, he might find them untenanted, or at any rate only safeguarded by that damned black-fellow. If the black interfered with him when he was searching the sitting-room or bed-

room, he would quickly do for him, if possible with the long clasp-knife he possessed; at the very worst, with a revolver. If the report brought an inquiry he could not evade, he would tell the innkeeper he was going to the place to leave some office papers, found the black doing something very questionable, remonstrated, was attacked by him, and fired in self-defence—make up some sort of story at any rate—enough to stay inquiries till Rupert's return. Rupert would be a mile away at the clubhouse or at the office, and by the time he returned Fazakerly would have caught the night mail to Sydney and got away with the samples. They were quite valuable enough for him to raise two or three hundred pounds on them in Sydney. Of course, he would change his name; but he might pick up enough capital there to get away with to the Dutch East Indies or New Zealand and start life afresh.

He carried out his plan with careful deliberation. First he went back to his lodgings, packed all his effects, and hired a trap to convey them to the station. To make quite sure, he purchased his ticket to Sydney in advance, explaining to the clerk that he might arrive somewhat in a hurry with not too much time to catch the train. He would stuff him up that he was going to Sydney only for a week's change. But if he did that he would have to take a return ticket, and that would mean another 53s. However, it was worth the expense if it baffled inquiries.

So all this was carried out. Rupert left the hotel

about a quarter to seven to drive to the club. But Fazakerly thought he would let the nest cool till eight o'clock before he commenced operations. The train did not leave till a few minutes after nine. He saw that his revolver was loaded and was properly bestowed in the rear pocket on the right side of his back, and the clasp-knife was in his waist-belt. At eight o'clock he sauntered quietly up to the inn. No one was at its entrance, nor was there any near sound of voices to indicate close attention. The host and guests seemed to be occupied by some concert or show in the back room of the ground floor. Fazakerly slipped up the stairs, turned to the right, and got on to the inner verandah on the first floor. Here, tiresomely enough, in his haste and in the darkness, he tripped, and to save himself from a stumble caught out at the bracket of an oil lamp. The force of the impact brought the lamp with a clatter on to the planks of the verandah, but, as was arranged in its make to avoid fires, the flame of the lamp was promptly extinguished, and he stood in palpitating darkness. His coming aroused the cockatoos, and they set up a hideous cackle of derisive welcome. He stood, motionless, till it subsided, reconnoitring the situation; then he moved with crafty, almost noiseless footsteps, except for the creaking of a board here and there along the verandah, prospecting the look of the rooms, and with his open clasp-knife handy for any surprise and tussle. One room, he saw, through its glassed window opening on to the verandah, was dimly lit, or had just been dimly lit,

for he did not notice the light before the other lamp had fallen down. He crept towards it and peered through the glass door. The light had seemed first to be a wandering and unsteady one. It was now fixed—a lamp standing on a bracket; underneath it, staring towards him, stood Kunapippi, or an object which seemed likest to him. A revolver shot—and they were just beginning to sing noisy choruses in the concert-room—might be in the long run the promptest solution. If it didn't kill outright he could finish with the knife. He tried the handle of the closed door opening on to the verandah. It was not locked, rather to his surprise. It did not admit him straight away to the sanctum he wished to explore. There was some fussy arrangement for the shutting out of mosquitoes which produced a haze between him and the lighted portion of the room, where he believed he saw Kunapippi standing underneath the lamp. However . . . he raised the revolver, took a careful aim, and drew the trigger. A second or two after his shot had struck the apparently unmoved figure — which did not collapse — something alive, strong, oily, and smelling like a black man jumped on to his back and was throttling him. The revolver had fallen from his right hand and he himself was swooning to the ground. His left hand felt feebly for the clasp-knife, but could not reach or could not find it. Then his senses left him in a swoon. When a few minutes afterwards he came to himself he found his arms tied closely to his sides. He was prostrate on the floor at the very

point where he had entered the room, in the corridor outside the mosquito net. From the position where he lay for some minutes yet, too stupefied to do anything or to attempt any purposeful movement, he looked towards the figure he had shot at. The shot had a little disturbed its arrangement, and he saw now that it was only a clever fake, some ethnological masks, head-dresses, adornments of emu feathers or kangaroo down.

It must have been the black who had jumped on his back and nearly strangled him, but the way in which he had been trussed and tied absolutely prevented his getting up, moving his hands, or examining anything. He thought the best plan would be to call for help or to begin to shout. The first shout was immediately followed by a drenching downpour which took away his breath. Nevertheless, he shouted again and again and again. At last he heard hurried footsteps, and the figure of a bar-tender burst into the room, followed by Kunapippi. He attempted, ridiculously trussed up as he was, to make up some story in self-defence, but the story was vigorously repudiated by Kunapippi in his broken English. The bar-tender, after loosening him, stooped down, found the revolver lying under his body, and Kunapippi himself exhibited the clasp-knife which he alleged having found on him. The circumstances seemed sufficiently suspicious for the bar-tender to summon the host, and the host, already having no very good opinion of Mr. Fazakerly, decided to call in the

police and have him lodged in the gaol pending inquiries.

When all this had been done, Rupert returned and was met by Kunapippi, as nearly excited as he had ever been, pouring forth a volume of scarcely understandable broken English, from which his master gleaned that, having the deepest suspicions of this particular white man, who had several times tried to kill him, he had resolved to give special attention to his master's rooms whilst he was out at dinner. Seeing Fazakerly strolling up soon after seven, he had guessed at what he might be attempting, had rigged up the figure under the lamp bracket and put himself in hiding in the passage outside the mosquito net. His quick ears had detected the arrival of the would-be robber, and the revolver shot had determined his leap on to the robber's back and all that followed.

This evidence, given under oath at the court a week afterwards, might not have been regarded very seriously by the magistrate, if one of the persons most nearly connected with the case had not been the managing director of a great mine. Fazakerly was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for an attempted burglary, and with this Rupert was content. It would keep the fellow out of the way whilst he finished his own affairs, and he would then take Kunapippi back with him to England and see if he could not find a safer home for him there.

What was the end—if there has been a termination to his life—of Carl Fazakerly? The end this

book will not reach, but you will possibly hear something about him at a later stage. Probably, after the expiry of his sentence, which no doubt may have been shortened by a few weeks owing to his good behaviour, he started back to Java with the greater part of his £150.

CHAPTER XIII

JUSTINA

RUPERT was very busy writing one morning at his office in the Rockerville Hotel. The troublesome problem about Fazakerly was over, and he had only a few more items of business to polish off before leaving Rockerville for Sydney. He had by now almost completely recovered his health, though his heart was still very sore over the loss of his faithful servant — Holroyd. Presently, as he wrote, he was conscious that something was standing between him and the brilliant light of the outside sunshine. He looked up sharply with a frown, and saw at first imperfectly in the interception of the brilliant light. He saw, in fact—as he thought for a startled minute—the figure of his wife between him and the outside sunshine. But it could not be. The face that smiled on him as its owner in neat travelling clothes looked at him from the doorway was near enough to Addie's likeness to excuse the momentary error ; but it was not Addie—it must be, it *was* Justina.

All this hesitation had occurred in less than half a minute. He rose, passed round his desk, extended both his hands, and exclaimed, ' Justina ! '

' Yes,' she replied, ' and I startled you. I had a note the other day from your sister Janet, as well as a home letter from Addie, both telling me of your return to Australia. Janet said in her letter that she had heard you had gone far into the interior and

had been very ill, and had lost your faithful attendant —what was his name? I remember seeing him with you in the year of your marriage. I gradually, by the aid of letters, tracked you down to this place, and then my impatience got the better of me. Henry was away at his estates in the interior, so I left the two children in charge of their nurse, got into the train—a ghastly journey—so hot and so dusty—and arrived here at an almost indecently early hour. I explained everything to a rather kind stationmaster, and he took me into his wife's quarters, where I performed a little toilet and tidying up; and here I am, and here I am going to stay—this is an hotel, and its proprietor has already told me he can give me a nice room—till you have finished your business and I can carry you off to my home to have a good rest. You look not seven years older than when we last met, but more like fourteen.'

'Well,' replied Rupert, 'this is such a delightful surprise that I cannot put my feelings into orderly words. I can only say you *are* a good creature. If you can give me four or five days at most, I shall have finished all my business here, and most thankfully will I go south with you and stop with you till my steamer starts. You are living, I think, quite close to Sydney?'

'Well, we are about ten miles away by rail, close to the seashore. I think you will agree that for Australia it is almost an ideal home. I will communicate from here with Henry and with home, by telegraph or telephone if there is one. Meantime

we will meet at meal-times and in the evening; I won't otherwise get in the way between you and your business. I have *heaps* to tell you, and heaps to hear from you. There is a rumour floating about that you have found fresh gold mines. I hope it is true. I have a thousand questions to ask you about Addie, and Mother, and Clarry and all the rest of them. Now don't disturb yourself any further. I will go and settle about my accommodation, and we will meet at lunch-time.'

She waved her hand in its grey glove and whisked herself out of the doorway, leaving Rupert to go back with rather a dazed mind to finish his writing.

He was putting on paper the draft of an important letter to a firm of analytical chemists, which he would shortly take to his company's office a mile away and dictate to a confidential clerk. He had difficulty in giving his mind to these severe and trite comments in their report on three samples of ore, and not introducing into the matter of his letter phrases like 'resembles Addie strikingly in voice and in face, but she's taller—a trifle taller—a little more authoritative, and has a more prominent chin.' There slid into his mind remembrances of long ago—it must have been more than eight years back in time—when he had seen Justina, long before he was in a position to adopt the family nickname of 'Justy'—and before he saw Addie; how he had almost reverentially admired her, and had even felt after their third valse a timid desire to propose, realizing that if *she* were an earl's daughter *he* was a wealthy

man. But then, almost when he was on the point of committing himself, she had said at another of their dances :

'I must introduce my younger sister, Addie. Adeliza, the poor thing's name really is, and we do not like the diminutive, but think it at any rate better than the full name.'

And after seeing Addie for three minutes only, he had fallen hopelessly in love. And then in the two or three months that elapsed before they were married it had seemed to him that Justina had rather markedly drawn herself apart from him and her sister, almost as though she were offended at the marriage. Had she guessed that probably if Addie had postponed her arrival from Parramatta for another week he would have proposed to Justina and become engaged to her ? Or was this only a morbid reflection due to his recent illness ?

However, Justina had married Henry Graveney Brightholm, a New South Wales senator and sheep-farmer and heaven knows what else, in 1902, and had two healthy children, so there could not have been much wrong with *her*. She must be now a woman of thirty-four or five, and was quite a noteworthy person in Sydney society, almost the leading lady of the place, except that the new Governor's wife was a person of higher rank and world-famous beauty.

They met again at lunch-time, Rupert so overjoyed, so heartened up, that out of a sense of decorousness he had to tone down his manner. Justina had been

a little tried by the Australian climate, so she looked her thirty-four years; but it only added dignity and a little stateliness to her appearance. Rupert glanced round the poorly, tawdrily decorated dining-room of the hotel. He did not arrogate to himself a particularly distinguished appearance—though he might have done so. But he considered that Justina's figure possessed such distinction that it made her seem like some fairy godmother visiting a humble hero of a German folk-tale in the Middle Ages. He proposed that for the remainder of the stay Justina should eat her meals with him in his own dining-room, one of his five reserved apartments, and she cheerfully accepted. Like him, she fell in love with the array of cockatoos, paroquets, and piping crows. Rockerville was frankly a hideous place, but the inside of the patio of the hotel with its palms and its parrot collection was distinctly picturesque, and to Rupert the whole episode was a delicious suggestion of difficulties overcome, home pleasures returning, and eventual peace of mind.

'Toomyvara!' Rupert exclaimed as they drove up to the imposing entrance gates to Justina's home near Sydney. 'You call it *that*! How nice of you!'

'Well,' said his sister-in-law, 'I thought later on it was a little sentimental, and just what anybody else might have done; but I always had a great liking for our Irish home—Addie has felt the same—and when she wrote and told me all the good you had done there and how you had helped Aunt

Charlotte and later on Mother and Father to get things straight, I felt that you would not mock at my poor little sense of romance. But I am really much more Australian than most people of our class. I do not think we make *half* enough of Australia, its *wonderful* climate, its gorgeous sunshine, its dazzling minerals, and its remarkable effect on sheep —I do not think we are sufficiently grateful for all this, or sufficiently original. If Ireland was not a distressed country, according to all accounts, I think I should give directions to have Toomyvara scratched out and some downright Australian or Pacific name inserted instead. But here we are, and here is Henry, on the doorstep, waiting to greet you. I think, as a matter of fact, you met one another at the Government House dances long ago ? '

It would have been uncivil and a waste of time to say he did not remember having seen Henry before ; he may have been at that stage too much absorbed in Addie. However, Henry, as now viewed in the light of a brother-in-law, seemed a distinctly satisfactory person ; not ever likely to want to borrow money, to bring about complications by treating Justina badly, or to cause any other form of vexatious interference with his affairs.

' Glad to meet you again, Rupert : ages since we last met, and can't say, when we did, what I thought about you. Never gone in myself much or at all for minin', but it 's helped to make Australia respectable and respected. I 'm exclusively agricultural, dairy and stock-rearing. But I 'm really glad—and

I say so now, *really*—to have you in our house before you go home. Think you might have written to us to say you were coming back to Australia, and we would have done everything we could to help you.'

'Well, I must not keep you all waiting in the hall whilst we are exchanging pleasant speeches, but I can see you are a really good chap. If I had not been so afraid of bothering people with my concerns, if I had realized earlier what a dear creature Justina is, I would have come and put myself under her wing some months earlier. But I have left half my heart behind. If it hadn't been for the three children, Addie would have come out with me, and then I could have spread myself. As it is, well, there has been a lot of hard business to settle. I have been ill, partly with grief over the death of Holroyd—my faithful servant, Justina remembers. Also I twisted my leg, or did something that strained muscles or tendons, at the very furthest point I got to on the verge of Central Australia. However, I am helping to detain you all in the hall, though I must say, it is well worth looking at. I wonder the New South Wales Parliament did not annex this site as the Federal city instead of that other place they have chosen near the Australian Alps.'

'Well, come and let me show you your rooms first of all,' said Justina. 'Have a good wash, a change, and a rest after our railway journey; and we will meet again at lunch-time.'

She preceded him along a corridor to the right, insisting on carrying two or three light articles from

his luggage, while her husband and an obviously British butler followed with the remainder. Rupert had been struck with the plural of the form 'rooms.' There was first of all an altogether delightful bedroom opening on to a verandah view of the Pacific. Then there was a bathroom, and beyond that was a cosy sitting-room with a well-furnished writing-table. Justina, as she deposited the two packages she had carried, looked at him before quitting the room, and looked so like Addie, that impulsively he stepped forward, raised her right hand, and kissed it. Then he turned away to look at the Pacific.

On turning round to face the problem of a bath, a change of clothes, and a refurbishing of himself, he saw Kunapippi, appealing for the keys with which to open the luggage containing clothes, shirts, and toilet accessories. He tossed him his keys, and heaved a sigh of intense thankfulness.

'What is the successor of your father like?' asked Rupert next morning, after a pleasant breakfast—brilliant sunshine outside, the strong scent of sweet flowers on and around the verandah (some people would dislike that, but he was far too sensible).

'Well, of course,' replied his brother-in-law cautiously, 'it is a great thing for the senior State in Australia to have a real live Duke as its Governor, and whether they show it or not, all the other Australian States are impressed, and yet a bit jealous. We were somewhat under the impression here when he first came that it was rather a consolation prize he had taken,

after leaving Bombay. It was said by the people who know, or pretend they know, that he came here because he could not stand Choselwhit in the Home Government, that he stood out for Free Trade; and so Balfour, to meet a difficulty, sent him here to succeed your father-in-law. There is always chatter of this kind about every appointment. I think he is a bit stuck-up—what you call "pompous" at home—but he is no fool, like most Australian Governors are. Only, as they are generally sent out to rule fools—as the Home Government regards us—it is not allowed to matter: I mean, the whole Press always asserts, whether they went home in three years or stayed their full term, that they were "immensely popular." I think he will stay his full term, as long as the Liberal Party is in power and he does not see any way to strike for the Premiership at home. Won't you have anything more? Not even a grape fruit? Well, then, we have done our breakfast. I suppose you ought to come with me into town and call on the Governor.'

Before starting with his brother-in-law, Rupert got hold of a *Year Book* out of the reference library in the inner hall, and looked up the Governor of New South Wales. His name in full was Victor Albert Conyngham Cadbury Pryce, and he was the third Duke of Merioneth. He had come out to Australia before Lord Tipperary had left in 1904, and as soon as he could after arrival had impressed on all who mattered the correct pronunciation of

his territorial title—Meriónеth ; but the four millions outside New South Wales generally pronounced the name of the shire Merionéth, out of British perversity. Henry told his brother-in-law, as they were motoring to Sydney, that in the intimate circles of Government House he was really known as ' On,' ' the great On.'

When they called at Government House and sent in their names, he was fortunately declared to be visible, and his reception of Rupert was distinctly favourable. Almost all the pomposity dropped from him when he found himself face to face with a man who really knew the world outside England and outside Australia, or at any rate spoke as though he did. He asked many questions about the Borderland Mining Company, and seemed to be registering replies in his brain. He was much interested in the story of Kunapippi, and the fact that he was to be taken over to England. Rupert did not wish to disturb him by the additional story of Carl Fazakerly and his hostility to the Australian blacks, and the interview was over before the Governor showed any sign of worry at conflicting claims on his time and attention.

Shortly after his return to ' Toomyvara ' there arrived a formal invitation to dinner with Their Excellencies, addressed to ' The Lady Justina Brightholm ' and ' Rupert Cuthbertson, Esq.'

The dinner duly took place. The Duchess was found to be a rather large, over-handsome lady, of United States origin. But although she was almost

stagily beautiful, with a style of good looks which obviously needed the constant care of maids and masseuses to keep going, unblemished, she was an entertaining woman, who had obviously taken a liking to her guests. Justina she had known since she, the Duchess, had first arrived in Sydney. She thought Rupert a striking-looking man, and though his wealth seemed small in comparison with hers, it was sufficient to establish him as respectable and not self-seeking. The loss of Holroyd, the taking home of Kunapippi, discoveries of great additional wealth in the furthest northern limits of New South Wales, especially when this wealth included rich finds of opals —and being an American and fond of jewellery, the discovery of the finest opals in the world seemed to her a very much more remarkable feat than the putting on the market of tungsten—all enhanced the qualities of Rupert; so altogether, this dinner-party and several other occasions of meeting before Rupert's steamer left Sydney Harbour made his remaining days in Australia extremely pleasant.

CHAPTER XIV

RUPERT RETURNS

RUPERT finally settled all his affairs on a good basis, and thankfully embarked at Sydney on his return to England. Kunapippi accompanied him as his servant, and was registered on the ship's books as 'Mr. Koona Pippy, second-class passenger.' In his neat suits which had been made for him before his departure, with his shorn locks and other conformity to modern fashions, he really did not look particularly 'Neanderthaloid,' was assumed by most of the passengers who did not inquire to be some Indian or Fijian type in attendance on his European employer. His wits went on expanding at a prodigious rate. In the course of six weeks he had to make a journey of something like a hundred thousand years, from the early Stone Age of the Australian savage to the twentieth century of the Christian Era. But he did it, as some others like him have done, and landed at Marseilles with his master, singularly little perturbed at its amazing civilization; and he was all smiles or sympathetic grins when on reaching the noise and bustle of Charing Cross Addie flung herself into her husband's fur-coated arms and burst into tears over the intensity of joy and relief at his safe return.

When Rupert was once more installed in the comforts and serenity of Sussex House, had washed and shaved and clothed himself in accordance with men's latest London fashions, his wife surveyed him

critically, even though affectionately, and saw that this absence of nearly two years in Australia had wrought on him its marked effect. He was thinner, his cheek-bones were more prominent, the bump in the middle of his nose she had never so fully observed before; there were lines of tendons and muscles in his neck more noticeable than in previous years; a watchful, eagle-like severity of glance would come into his eyes over a mere trifle, making him forget for the moment that he was only about to criticize an omission of the housemaid or an oversight of the new butler, and need not imagine he was detecting a new fraud or an attempted murder. When Addie rallied him he would admit the change.

'The death of Holroyd upset me horribly. I have blamed myself over and over again for not putting him down at the Scattersons' ranch, or letting him rusticate somewhere else in safety. But he was so doggedly devoted to me that there seemed no turning back. I felt if I left him behind he would have followed overnight and caught me up. At the same time his death has been a jarring shock, considering he was in my service for something like thirteen years. How is his widow getting on?'

'I think all right, but we shall have to make some arrangement to meet the case; not only because it is awkward her sharing the butler's quarters in the back premises, but on account of her three children. They are growing up, two of them go to school, and soon there will not be room for them *and* the butler too. But you know she is rather an attractive woman.

She is very useful as maid to me, now she has come back again into service, and . . . and . . . I should not be tremendously surprised if the butler proposes to her and she accepts him. He is a bachelor at present, and looks on her with no unkindly eye, and she is in no way averse to him. He has been kind about her two boys, and altogether it would be a happy solution if she accepted him.'

'So be it: let 's hope it will turn out like that. We can postpone the question. Now what other troubles are there, dearest? there *must* be others that have germinated in the course of two years, and that you have not been able to settle in my absence.'

'Well, of course, there are always our relations! There is my brother Donald, not satisfactorily settled yet, and Mother bothering about him. He is only twenty-three, and wants to get married to Crathie's youngest daughter. You shall see Mother's letters when you have time and patience. Then there is Gladys. First of all, two years ago, she wanted to go on the stage. Earlier still, you will remember, she had a love disappointment. She has always been rather a tiresome girl, not so good-looking as Claribel, or so placid as "Justy"—by the bye, you know far more about "Justy" than I do! You must tell me all you saw and surmised presently. But about Gladys: two years ago she wanted to go on the stage, and Mother had some difficulty in preventing her wasting money over it. Then she suddenly caught up with the Suffragettes, and do you know, I was quite

relieved, because the women she fell in with, admired, and followed were all persons of good family and good morals. I dare say you saw in the newspapers, even out in Australia, that she had been in prison —second division—for a month. That has a little tamed her. She was here only about a month ago, and told me rather defiantly that she had refused two offers of marriage, didn't want to marry. Father left her just enough to live on, and she is going steadily to prepare herself for parliamentary candidature. She has developed a peculiar feud with the Sackwiths, and I had there to intervene.

'I have seen your brother Ardney, by the bye, twice in all since you have been away, and there is an enormously long story to tell about him. It does not require urgent steps to be taken, so I will postpone it till you have had a rest.

'I have heard from Dorothy—a week ago, I think it was—that her husband had some upset over his money affairs—lost two or three thousand pounds over his investments, and has had to give up the stars for a bit and write about entomology. He has been making quite a lot of money, I heard, lately over some new popular natural history periodicals, which he has been writing or editing. She seemed to think it was rather a come-down to descend again to the solar system, and to make kindly references to the Almighty in the natural history; but I told her in these hard times we wanted money first and foremost, enough to keep a roof over our heads and educate our children. But, dear thing, you must

not be overwhelmed with family news till you have had a rest. It will all wait. I have done my best at any rate to stave off any catastrophe, and I have completely reorganized our kitchen, with a Sentry boiler, and *heaps* of other things.'

The electors of North Marylebone had not been pleased—in a majority—by the Radical member they elected to Parliament at the beginning of 1906. Many of them bore Rupert a grudge for having withdrawn in the autumn of 1905. But when he had settled down again at Sussex House after his return from Australia, and was gilded in popular estimation by a rumour that he had made much money by going out there again, he was approached by several noteworthy persons—great doctors, one or two celebrated painters, several men of science, a very prosperous ex-publican who had retired from business and was in health conditions which caused him to waver in attachment to brewers and distillers—and was pressed by these noteworthy people —distrustful of beery Conservatism and yet dissatisfied with the outlook of Mr. Sackwith and his war against women—to state whether he would not stand once more for Parliament: he could pose either as a Liberal or as a Conservative, but they wanted a man fit to be a legislator, and not a speculative, uneducated rotter such as still represented North Marylebone. So, morally strengthened, almost rejuvenated at having set things right in Australia, or, as far as he could roughly calculate, made them

a little better than they were ten years ago, he consented.

Addie was wavering in regard to Woman Suffrage, inclined to throw herself into the struggle to obtain it, except that she had a premonition that she was going to give birth to another baby, a fourth child, and did not want to run any physical risks either on her own part or for the sake of the child's well-being. Still, with this reservation, she had been completely won over, added to which she knew that Rupert felt as she did—that the exclusion of the women of the present day from a position of full citizenship was becoming an anomaly.

So in January 1910 Rupert stood as Liberal candidate for North Marylebone, and was elected by a pretty fair majority over the hastily put forward Conservative. For, prior to his acceptance he had sought out the sitting member, the unsatisfactory Radical I have referred to (whose agent had assured him he had not the ghost of a chance of being re-elected) and had made his withdrawal a certainty, by easing his financial position in some unexplained way.

The age was becoming inured to these parliamentary changes of opinions, to Conservatives standing at the next election as Radicals, or Radicals draping themselves on reconsideration as Liberal Unionists. Rupert's majority was quite a handsome one; but in other respects the Liberal Party returned to Parliament considerably shaken and reduced in numbers.

Amongst other personalities with whom his entry into Parliament made him more fully acquainted—and he found in some ways this election led to an extraordinary social change and uplifting—was the Duke of Merioneth, whom he had first met at Sydney, and who had returned to private life in 1909. The Duke's magnificent town house was—had been for a hundred years—one of those sumptuous residences almost lost to the unauthorized public gaze in the western part of Regent's Park. I think it had a garden of something like four acres. The garden grew the most perfect strawberries, the most wonderful green peas and sweet peas, and had various fountains and fish-ponds, at which, of course, nobody ever fished—the carp fed out of your hand.

The Duke of Meriónеth was at the head of a Welsh peerage. I put the acute accent on the penultimate syllable, to show how this Welsh county name is conventionally pronounced. I dare say its spelling is no longer consonant with its original British name, and it is still almost the wildest, most primitive part of Wales. Somewhere in its recesses, in the Elizabethan period, there settled an attorney named Pryce. His principal descendant at Bala in Charles II.'s reign received a baronetcy for some political service. His thrifty son, by two well-planned marriages in succession, added enormously to his estates, and was made a Baron by William III. His son became an Earl under George II., and his great-grandson a Duke at George IV.'s coronation. The first Duke's grandson potted an enormous amount of money over

the Liverpool waterworks at Lake Vyrnwy—the negotiations were all carried on by his trustees. He was supposed to have too lofty a mind, too wonderful an intelligence, to concern himself overmuch about prosy business affairs, and at the time the bargain was struck he was a prominent under-graduate at Oxford, where he took, amongst other distinctions, the Newdigate Prize for Poetry. I think the subject given was 'Happiness,' and his poem went to show how unaffectedly happy you might be if you had an assured income of twenty thousand a year.

Then after he left Oxford he went to Egypt on a very special sort of standing in 1882. I think he was only twenty-two at the time, and more care was taken over him than was bestowed on the Duke of Dublin, a royal prince, or on H.S.H. the Duke of Mecklenburg. He wrote a report on 'Assiout in War Time,' which was not at all bad (though the Arabic all through it required drastic correction), and which in its description of the Assiūt market-place, and the attack on the railway station, had something about it almost anticipatory of Kipling. He afterwards drifted on to Suakin, where he got rather uncomfortably mixed up in a panic or a muddle in an unexpected Fuzzywuzzy attack. He never liked to be reminded of this, because he had distinctly lost his head. But that the officer charged with the task of looking after him had been killed outright, the bear-leader might have got into trouble.

After that, the young Duke went through a period of invalidism. He was supposed to be threatened

with tuberculosis. He got well, however, by incessant travel, and more especially by an exploratory journey in Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands. This drew him under the notice of the United States, who at first feared that he was going to annex the Galápagos Archipelago to the British Empire. In the subsequent discussion he was drawn into the States to give his opinion at the Legation (as it was then called) and the White House; and in Washington he met a surprisingly beautiful young woman who was a distant cousin of Irita Parkyns and many times wealthier. Since she had entered Washington society at the age of nineteen, she had decided that she was so wealthy, so faultlessly beautiful and finished in education, that she could not marry anything less than an English Duke, a Roman or an Austrian Prince, or a German Prime Minister.

Merioneth was introduced to her at the British Legation. In twenty-four hours he had decided that with her dowry to back him, and her beauty, he might attain a position at least as high as British Prime Minister. So he proposed. And the marriage, two months afterwards, was a world event of the late 'eighties.

He returned to England, looking twice the man he had been when he quitted it, and impressing most of the Conservatives whom he met that his progress to the headship of the House of Lords and the Premiership beyond it was inevitable.

Curiously enough, however, there was something about him which failed to catch the eye, the imagina-

tion, the backing of the old Queen Victoria. The enthusiasm she could show over a Disraeli, a Salisbury, a Kitchener, was never drawn from her by Merioneth. On his second interview, when he was already an Under Secretary of State, she criticized the cut of his frock-coat. She also persisted in giving her opinion on burnt almonds,[1] when he wished her to deign to pass her comments on the Afghan situation or the Maharajah of Gwalior. Once or twice about that period—the very early 'nineties—she dwelt, it seemed to him, no longer appropriately, on his youthful appearance, and his French pronunciation, which he thought perfect, but which Her Majesty was inclined to call in question. A rumour also reached him that Princess Clotilda did not like his wife or her pronunciation of English, and that one of the Royal Princes had pronounced him to be priggish in not appreciating Rudyard Kipling.

However all that may be—and it is now gossip utterly dead—Merioneth's career met through the 'nineties with a number of unexpected checks and

[1] I remember learning at a later date that the Queen had far more sense in this inquiry than the Duke of Merioneth imagined. The Amir of that period had a great and quite harmless appreciation of this form of confectionery. The Viceroy of the period, having ascertained his penchant, resolved to gratify it rather pompously by framing an instruction that a thousand pounds' worth of burnt almonds should be sent to the Amir annually from the Indian Government; and moving on to the ambassadorial post in Paris, conferred the order for their supply on a French confectioner in the Avenue de l'Opéra. Queen Victoria, stumbling on the incident in some later confidential correspondence, had very sensibly inquired whether there was no English firm in Birmingham or Brighton who might have executed the commission quite as well as any Paris house; but her inquiry was thwarted by the lofty stupidity of her Under Secretaries of State.

interruptions; and though he is not dead yet, he has never become Prime Minister, though he has risen nearly as high. His viceregal and diplomatic posts kept him away from England during the first nine years of the twentieth century and from enlarging his distrust of Mr. Choselwhit into a party shaking quarrel. He had been ten years out of office when he met Rupert for the second time, returned from New South Wales. The fact that Rupert now sat in the House as a supporter of the Liberal Party made no difference to the Duke of Merioneth, who announced himself with some emphasis as 'before all things a Free Trader'; besides, his long residence abroad had made him think that the details of British home politics and policy were of trivial importance so long as *he* was kept from office. And though inherently a prig, fettered and dwarfed by many prejudices of birth and breeding, he was nevertheless a much-travelled man, to whom Rupert and his work in Australia made a convincing appeal.

Then he had known Addie's father, and the fact that she was the daughter of an earl sealed the business. Addie's looks, speech, and character appealed to his American Duchess, who always felt herself a little out of place in English society, afraid of comments on her accent and her style in costume. The existence, moreover, of Irita clinched the business. It really seemed as if Irita's after-life was going to be disproportionately happy.

Another personage whom entry into the House of

Commons on the Liberal side was to secure for Rupert as an acquaintance—he was too cold and shy to inspire friendship—was Sir Godfrey Seabright, also a former Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs when Queen Victoria reigned and Lord Rosebery ruled.

'Now I see what you are leading up to,' the average reader will exclaim: 'you are going to make Rupert in a short time Secretary of State for the Colonies.'

Dear me, no! He had been re-elected to Parliament in December 1910, but he did not feel the time even yet had come for his retiring from the Borderland Mining Company of New South Wales. He felt that its affairs must have at least another ten years of his superintendence, and that was incompatible with any official position in Great Britain.

Apart from business reasons, he was intensely interested in Australia and in Australian problems, though he preferred living in England, in London. Now that he was in the House of Commons he saw as much as he wanted of the imperfect way in which we were governing, governed, and administered, and had some slight foothold from which he could promote corrections here and reforms there.

But to revert to Sir Godfrey Seabright, once Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. This was in a remote period, when Rupert was battling with minerals and miners, engineering works, metallurgical experiments and discoveries in New South Wales. But when, long years afterwards, as a parliamentary representative, he came to know Sir

Godfrey Seabright, the W. initial of his fore name had been dropped in public use. [The W. had stood for Willebrand. His mother, Augusta Sympson, had married his father, a baronet, and the son of a private secretary of George IV., and in the remote period of the 'sixties, 'seventies, had a wistful fancy for Teutonic names.]

Sir Godfrey Seabright's real enthusiasm after he left Eton and lawn tennis lay in the direction of entomology. He had gradually amassed a wonderful collection of beetles. I say this without even an approach to a sneer, because beetles contain almost the largest and the smallest forms of insect, and the large types develop remarkable adornments and vivid colours. But Sir Godfrey Seabright, whose real sustained passion was for the beetles of British Guiana and the Cameroons, and whose other loves and longings were centred and satisfied in his New Forest home, was also a Freemason. He had been inducted into the bish-bash-bosh of Freemasonry by the earnest wish of his father, who died soon after his induction. Queen Victoria was then very much alive, and very much at Windsor, and Seabright's father had solicited in the matter of Freemasonry the patronage of the new Provincial Grand Master of Berkshire, the Duke of Dublin, one of Queen Victoria's sons.

Just about the time he was getting elected to Parliament, and soon afterwards trying to grapple with the intricacies and mysteries of foreign affairs (of which he had been appointed Under Secretary),

Sir Godfrey had to—or thought, from a filial sense of duty, that he had to—grapple with this dreary form of eighteenth century mysticism, a bogus imitation of the deadly secrecy of the Middle Ages. He had once written a rather serious little work on Badminton, and published it at the close of his studies at Oxford University, at a time in his life when an interest in beetles (which had begun when he was sixteen) must not be avowed in a future statesman, who would, however, do quite the right thing in his young manhood in expressing an opinion on manly sports. He laid down the law about Badminton, a law which was never afterwards infringed, till the game became extinct in 1900.

Godfrey Seabright did not, like so many other characters in this story, live in Regent's Park: he had a house—a rather dreary house, it always seemed—in Grosvenor Square, which had been built in the reign of George IV. Though he belonged to the alternative Party of the State to the Duke of Merioneth, there was a certain friendship and collaboration between the two. They really were at heart agreed on great questions of Foreign and Colonial policy. Merioneth had directed Seabright's attention to Rupert as a noteworthy fellow-Liberal, a possibly great Imperialist in the immediate future, who would do very well—now that he was in the House of Commons—as an Australian Governor or Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. So Lady Seabright asked Rupert and Lady Adeliza to dinner, and showed herself to be a most charming woman, greatly

explaining in herself the newspaper popularity of her husband, and his extraordinary advance in the direction of Imperial affairs.

'The Colonial Office,' said Rupert at this small dinner, when the company had passed to the consideration of a fine dessert, were able to listen to him, and had pressed him to speak—'The Colonial Office is in its secret heart rather despondent about Australia. It takes too short a view. The exploration of the nineteenth century revealed a narrow fringe along the east coast—Victoria, Tasmania—and the extreme south-west—of heavy or at any rate of sufficient rainfall. The supply was a little capricious, looked at from an all-embracing point of view. Here and there, and now and then, it ran to floods, alternating with months of drought. Still, it proved sufficient rainfall to nourish forests of mighty trees, millions of acres of wheat, and pasturage for millions of sheep and cattle. Yet, look at a map of Australia, and you will see a vast core of ugly desert covering the greater part of its interior.

'But then I could show you some similarly disheartening areas in central and north-eastern Asia, in the south-west of the United States, in the Sahara Desert, and in parts of South America and South Africa; and in all these cases I think we are going to find that though the deserts appear appalling at first glance, they turn out, after a little fossicking, to be amazingly, staggeringly rich in minerals. Below the surface, at six feet, or six hundred, or three thousand, we find water. The mineral wealth pays

for the research; the water comes up and quenches the thirst of the imported workmen, white, black, or yellow. Then the water in irrigation enables vegetation to live. After a time, this painfully nurtured vegetation attracts a little—more—and at last enough rain. And so by degrees, with the aid of the money produced by the minerals, we turn these regions into habitable areas. But if I go on any longer I shall bore you to death, and you won't be listening.'

The seven other people of the party of course protested that they would be listening eagerly to any more information; but he wisely knew he had spoken long enough, and changed the subject to the coming cricket match, or—I forget the season of the year—the football challenge to Australia.

CHAPTER XV

HE ENTERS PARLIAMENT

'HULLO, Manders,' cried Rupert one day in the spring. He was coming away from the Natural History Museum, and encountered Stephen Manders walking up the steps to its entrance. 'What an extraordinary coincidence! I have not seen you since I came back from Australia and got into Parliament; in fact, I do not think we have met since we lunched together five years ago. Of course, five years has made as much difference in you as it has in me. I dare say I look to you old and lean and scraggy and discoloured. And you—well, of course you look older . . . and a little stooped, not quite as well as I should like to see you. Still, it 's Manders all right, and I recognized you coming towards me as soon as I emerged. How 's Dorothy? And how are the children? Grown up in any case, I should think.'

'Dorothy is fairly well, though she is approaching that troublous period in a woman's middle-age, the change of life—we are now allowed to refer to it and write about it. However, as soon as she is over that, she will flourish again, I *sincerely* hope, for I am inextricably attached to her. The family is getting on all right, preparing to earn its living. I have rather suffered in health and just a little in fortune whilst you have been away. I made some bad investments. The fact is only worth mentioning since it serves to explain why I am once more at

work, rather harder than ever, and—would you believe it?—writing about *insects* instead of astronomical problems! . . . And that is why I am here to-day. I want to look up a wonderful collection of beetles the Museum has obtained from Brazil through Sir Godfrey Seabright.'

'Beetles instead of Betelgeuse! Well, I won't say to you that it 's a come-down, because I expect the same problems run through beetle evolution as govern the stars. But if you find entomology as interesting, as absorbing as astronomy, you need not be pitied for spreading that knowledge, instead of looking through telescopes and doing awful sums in algebra. In fact, I expect it 's better for your health, because you used to catch terrific colds over studying the stars.'

'Oh, well, in a way you are right: as long as one is learning and earning. I expect if you had been at home instead of out in Australia, and I had consulted *you*, I should not have lost several thousand pounds over foolish investments.'

'Well, you must tell me all about the trouble at your ease. Will you come back to lunch at Sussex House?'

'I should like to awfully, but I simply must see this collection now and make my notes; and after that catch a train back to Woodstock and write my article. But the mere seeing you again, my dear fellow, and realizing you are back in England, restores me my confidence to a heartening degree. If you don't mind being bothered for advice every now

and again, I will never take another step in finance without consulting you. I believe in reality Dorothy and I have got quite enough to live on and to leave to our three children, but I belong to the class of investor that is—or used to be—easily misled by the issuers of prospectuses.'

So Rupert signalled for a taxi, and his brother-in law lost all consciousness of outward things when he was inspecting this marvellous collection of coleoptera.

'I think,' Addie said one morning, 'I have found a solution at this stage for Rita's unhappiness. No. 8 in Hanover Terrace is to let — Professor Callamy died, you remember, a month ago, and his widow and daughter have to move elsewhere. It is not a large house, and Rita could well afford to live there, and she would be, so to speak, living under our eyes. I could see that she was set up with the right kind of household. It would be much better than her present existence in the country, where she gets terribly moped, and where some of her neighbours try to live at her expense.'

So action was taken, and Irita was installed at No. 8, and assisted to sell her house near Bookham Common. Fortunately, it was wanted for a projected golf links, and she sold it to advantage. Addie saw that only a reasonable portion of the amount was spent on redecorating the hundred-years-old house in Hanover Terrace; and quite a new sprightliness of manner and plump good looks were brought back to her sister-in-law's face by the transference to Regent's Park and the induction of the plaintive

lady into the fringe of London society. The Zoo and the Royal Botanic Gardens were great attractions for her rather empty mind, and the constant proximity of Addie, and her cheery escort at theatre or concert, flower-show or House of Commons, enormously brightened Irita's life.

'Do you know what I am plotting?' said Addie one day to a rather weary-looking husband. He looked up without suggesting an answer to her question.

'I am plotting to bring about a reunion between Herbrand and Rita. Just look at things as they are. That poor woman is greatly better in health than she was in the early days of her married life with him. His second wife—the Toomis woman—has been dead for a year—you will remember she died in the influenza epidemic on the Riviera. Herbrand is growing older—he is well in the 'thirties. He is fond of his two children, and would like to see them well brought up. One way and another he has not far short of three thousand a year, and Rita—some aunt of hers left her a little more money, you may or may not remember, a short while ago—cannot have much less. *Now*, if we could only bring them together again and make them *re*-marry, she would be the best kind of stepmother for Bertie's children, and she might—who knows?—she is not beyond the reach of a miracle—have another child herself? At any rate she could have a very nice London home in Hanover Terrace, and there would be Herbrand's place for them and for the children in the country.'

Rupert said, 'Well, it is an idea that pleases you, and which *may* turn out all right. Have a try at it.'

So Addie had her try. She first of all saw Irita comfortably established at No. 8. Then she re-entered into correspondence with her brother, got him to come up to London one day and lunch, and afterwards talked about Greta. She said nothing on the subject of Irita. But a few weeks later, writing about something else, she mentioned in a postscript that Irita had settled down quite near them, having sold her Surrey house. And again, in a later letter, she slid in a sentence or two, saying that Irita had put one or two questions of a kind nature regarding his two children by Greta; that she expressed a desire to see them, if it were ever possible; and Addie herself thought it would be nice if his boy and girl came up and spent a week with Rupert and herself in the early summer, to make acquaintance with *their* children. And then somehow, one day in June—I think it was a Sunday—Addie asked Herbrand to come and lunch, and go with them afterwards to the Zoo, and the only other person to meet him besides Rupert and herself was Irita, who had been straitly pressed by Addie to come and trust herself to *her*.

So Irita was already there, sitting next Addie on a drawing-room sofa, when Herbrand was shown in. He seized the situation like the man of the world he professed to be. The lunch was almost gay, with no indiscreet references to past history; the after-

noon at the Zoo altogether delightful. There were not in those days the crowds which swamp the Zoo at present on a fine Sunday. It was a lovely day. The birds and beasts were heartened by it, and showed themselves off to advantage. After they had seen enough, they strolled back through the Park population, the groups and stands of orators making horrible denunciations and lurid prophecies; and had an altogether enjoyable tea served on the balcony of the first floor. Herbrand before leaving at six o'clock said to Irita:

'I 'd like to have a look at your installation in Hanover Terrace. Can I come one afternoon this week?'

He came. He gave Irita, Addie, and Rupert a well-chosen dinner at a hostelry which in those days took the place of the Ritz, and bore them off in an electric motor to a box at the theatre.

And so things wore on till London society broke up after the Coronation, at the end of that July, to migrate to the country. Addie and Rupert went in August to Ireland—Toomyvara. When they returned to join their children in a brief seaside sojourn they learnt from Herbrand that he and Irita had been re-married at the discreet Registry Office in Marylebone, and were going to try to live 'straight' henceforth.

Parliament in the autumn of 1911, and public opinion also, were supposed to be convulsed over the struggle between the House of Commons and the

Lords. The House of Lords, as you may remember, had then possession of a definite veto on any legislation they did not like and felt they could resist. It was an impossible assumption from 1832 onwards, but it was seldom pushed by the Peers to a decision by public opinion, because, though crisis after crisis arose under Queen Victoria, the Lords gave way at the last moment and a majority was recorded for the unpopular measure. But in the autumn of 1911 it really seemed as though, taking advantage of the inexperience of the new Sovereign, they were going to push the point to an issue. They would not allow Ireland to have Home Rule, and Mr. Sackwith had to threaten them with the creation of five hundred men as Peers, pledged beforehand to vote for the House of Commons measure.

'I do not see what the Lords can do,' said Rupert, to this, that, and the other acquaintance. 'For a hundred years we have been utterly illogical, utterly wrong in our treatment of the sister island. The mere fact that a branch of the sea flows between us, too wide or too deep for us to tunnel through and connect by railway, makes Home Rule in Ireland inevitable, whether or not we divide Ulster from the rest of Ireland and set up two subsidiary Parliaments instead of one. If Scotland wanted it enough, she too would have Home Rule, but the land connection and the railways have annulled her wishes in that direction, though she has as much of it as she wants. Even in the days when I was a Conservative of sorts—mainly because I was an Imperialist and

could not stand the pettifogging policy of the nineteenth-century Liberals—I favoured Home Rule; and I simply cannot understand the fatuity of the Peers in perpetually deferring it—deferring it even till they have driven Ireland into some sort of fatuous uprising.'

This was the kind of speech which he was led into delivering in the House of Commons smoking-room. The weakness of the Liberals as a party he found to be in the excessive individuality of their own members. Mark Andrews, for example, one of the representatives of Coventry, with whom he had sought acquaintance to help on his brother Ardney's affairs—for Andrews was one of the financial magnates of his company. Andrews was very indifferent as to whether the Irish obtained Home Rule or were burked of their Catholic desire—for Andrews was very hostile to the Roman Catholics. Andrews seemed always to be running after some impracticable hare—a question or a reform—the capture of which would seem to many a waste of time and effort.

'You seem a very different sort of chap from your brother who is with us at Coventry,' said Andrews one day, by which time he had, so to speak, adjusted his focus or general and vague circumspection into a particular interest in this unaccountably simple Mr. Cuthbertson, the husband of an earl's daughter, mysteriously rich and of good repute in the city; and yet young-looking, good-looking, and distinctly a man of the world.

'Your brother, of course, is younger than you are,

and has never been abroad to speak of. But—if I may say so without seeming rude—he does not seem to be up to your calibre.'

'He passes beyond my calibre in several directions—amongst others, in mechanics generally and the construction of motor cycles.'

'Just so; and that is the reason why we are sticking to him, as well as the fact that we are working under a five years' agreement, which was only concluded last year. I think we pay him something like £2000 a year, and as regards business—inventions, improvements—he is worth it. But I hear rather rummy stories about his morals. If you have got the chance, you might look into the question and perhaps give him a hint to slow-up, or marry—settle down respectably, I mean. His father was a Cathedral potentate, wasn't he? I am a Nonconformist, so far as I am anything, and it is the Nonconformists at Coventry who seem to be shaking their heads over your brother's goings-on.'

'It is in the direction of Christian names and their multiplicity that we ought to introduce taxation,' said another legislator in the smoking-room to Rupert. 'Sackwith won't even listen to me. He thinks I am out to waste his time and fatigue him with fads. But although I may have started the business—I think I did—as a *jest*, I am beginning to think it over seriously *now*. How absurdly our nomenclature has developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, and gone on increasing in

foolishness in the twentieth! At any rate, since some vague date after the Norman Conquest, people were supposed to have two names only; the personal name they were given at the font, by which God, the angels, and the priest were supposed to know them; and the clan or caste or tribal name tacked on to show their relationship, their descent, or the family of the lord under whom they served. "William Smith," for example, showed that the owner of the name was a male called William, and that he belonged to the clan of the Smiths. But after the nineteenth century got into full swing and names began to be multiplied, he might be called at the font "William Thomas Henry Carmichael," and his surname of Smith might be gradually edged out by the intrusion of another surname like Edgington or Montmorency, which he would tack on to it until he could afford the necessary legal notices for dropping Smith and blossoming forth as Edgington. But it is the *multiplicity* of Christian names that irritates me most. "Gladys Margaret Mary Blessington" I came across the other day in a marriage advertisement, and even then you had not reached her surname, which, I believe, was a double-barrelled one. Well, now, if I might have my way, if she was not content with the single name of Gladys, plus her surname, she or her parents at the time of her christening ought to have paid the State £20 each for the extra names.

'And even then she ought to realize how futile is the whole scheme: how weary the angels will all get at having to know her not only as Gladys, but

also as Margaret Mary Blessington. They are sure to make a muddle over it somewhere in the stellar universe or on the approach to Purgatory. What can we want with more than *one* name? I know in the United States they try to meet the question by calling you Mary-Ellen or John-Jacob.'

Mr. Hallbright was also a Liberal, but the question of names did not interest him. The passion of his life and mature manhood was the protection of British birds. He lived at The Gorse Bushes, Barnes, a really nice house, not far from the banks of the river, with its rather large garden going down without intervention to the water's edge, and preserving round about the house—which was well built, modern, and quite nice-looking—groups of pines and fine large clumps of gorse bushes remaining from an older phase of common land. He and his wife had had the good taste to see that in gorse bushes blossoming ten months out of the twelve, in clumps of heather and in spreads of harebells and primroses, they had as pretty surroundings of garden land as you could expect to find near London.

I think he was member for some west or south-west suburb of London, but I do not think he succeeded in getting re-elected after the war was over. He was really a nice person, and he had a mildly successful career at Oxford. His wife was even nicer; but their chief, almost exclusive, interest in life was as sentimental ornithologists. As soon as Rupert was elected to Parliament they had sought his acquaint-

ance on matters of Australian ornithology. They had many questions to ask about the privileged position of the Laughing Jackass—'Kookaburra, we call it,' Rupert had replied.

'Yes, I dare say,' Hallbright had answered. 'But is it receiving sufficient protection?'

'I think so. It seems as abundant as ever it was.'

'And the Yellow-breasted Shrike Robin, and the Red-tipped Pardalot?' interrupted Mrs. Hallbright—it was on the Terrace by the River, outside the House of Commons, and Rupert was giving them tea.

'I am ashamed to say—Won't you pour out, and then I shan't have to ask you if you take sugar and milk?—I am ashamed to say I ought to know those names, having been so much in Australia, but I do not recollect what they look like. In any case they are small birds, and the colonists are not small-bird shooters. They only try to exterminate the larger marsupials and the snakes. And even in those directions nowadays, I think they are concentrating their efforts mainly on the extermination of the rabbit. The rabbit has certainly rendered that service to Australia; it has indirectly saved many of the native birds and mammals.'

'My wife, as you see, is a great bird protector. Before we married, when she was quite young, she had done much to save the Lesser Whitethroat in Kent, and round about our house at Barnes she has had the gratification of giving a refuge to the Smoky-tinted Hedge Sparrow.'

'I must confess,' said Rupert, proffering lukewarm

buttered toast, 'to being rather a hazy duffer on these questions of British birds. I sympathize with you in principle, but I want to go much further. If it was the case of reintroducing the largest form of bustard or the biggest and most effective vulture, or hooper swans on every river, and pelicans in the Thames, and the Golden Eagle in Surrey, I should be with you heart and soul. But in my ignorance—and perhaps my eyesight is not as it was—I cannot tell one warbler from another, or find out why you have not enough to be contented with in the ordinary Whitethroat; why you are moved to your marrow over finding a smaller type.'

Then there were heads of tiny parties within the great Liberal Party, eaten up with a desire to reform the doings of small colonizing powers, like Belgium, Portugal, Peru. They were mostly men for whom Rupert had a great respect. Without much previous experience of foreign travel, some incident, some commission had sent them out to the island of São Thomé, to the rubber-producing forest lands on the eastern versant of the Andes, or to the great and still mysterious—though the mystery was fast vanishing—affluents of the Congo. They had come back with terrible stories—just a little, but not much, exaggerated—about the shocking treatment of Negroes or pristine Amerindians. Generally they had little knowledge of any other tongue than English. Rapid conversations in Spanish, Portuguese, or French were beyond their capacities. Perverse rivals of this or that

company or government were generally at hand to try to gammon them. Still, discounting a tenth of their talk as exaggeration or misrepresentation, they had risen to fever-heat over some real wrong.

But, as Rupert realized, though it was a thing to wring your hands over, the wrongdoing might be matched in Burma, Zululand, East Africa, North-West Australia, or Hong-Kong. Let us—he faintly argued—clear up every piece of wrongdoing, every condition of injustice in the British Empire; make that flawless to the criticism of France or Holland, and then begin to call the world's attention to injustice to the Negro in the Southern States of the Union, the woes of the Jews in Rumania or Eastern Russia, or the misgovernment of Abyssinia.

He began to think that, as his brother-in-law, Stephen Manders, had just enough money to live on and a well-furnished brain, but no particular career to grip his attention, he would be an excellent addition to the Liberal Party in the House of Commons. So to start him off in that direction he asked him up every now and then to the tea-room in the House, where many discussions arose and where non-members might attend and drink tea.

Stephen proved a little disappointing, because he would not give sufficient attention to political questions of immediate urgency. Just now he had let his thoughts stray from astronomy to evolution in beetles, and from beetles to some large kind of cicada in the United States, which lived in larval form

fourteen years underground before coming up to the surface and blossoming out for a few weeks as a big cicada with a repulsive head. And now it was the length of personal names amongst the Greeks and Romans.

'It is curious,' said Stephen, 'about the names given to people in classical times. Curious, if you stop to think about it, but hardly any one of our classical scholars ever does. All their lore is eighteenth century, and no such subject seems to have entered into the eighteenth-century mind. If you look into the Latin literature of the declining period—the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, before the Romance languages were formed, you will notice that they had no idea of short, sharp diminutives like Jack, Ted, Bert, Susy, Jane. They developed a craze for diminutives which is clearly traceable in the formation of Italian, but it only extended by several syllables the name they had to pronounce. Look at the termination *-ulus*; how it is done to death in the literatures of that period.'

'Yes,' said Rupert; 'won't you have another cup of coffee?'

'I will. But I must have very little coffee and much milk. . . . Thank you. . . . And then, look at Greece. Had the Greeks in classical times between Homer and Alexander *no* pet names, *no* diminutives? Had one got to say *always*, "Epaminondas, shut the door"?—if the Greeks had doors, and I suppose they had; or "Chrysostomos, aren't you going to drive the cows home?" Surely Greek lovers must have

sometimes wished to say "Ari" instead of "Ariadne"? And the Roman and Byzantine emperors? Some of them were affectionate men. Most of them loved somebody or other with a mad passion. Was Constantinus never known as Conni, or Augustus as Gus? And the fact that this whole question has never received any consideration from any respectable writer astonishes me. We know that in those days people fiercely loved and fiercely hated, but it is only in about the twelfth or thirteenth century of this era that we find the Neo-Latins and the Germans beginning to chop down names—when they felt deeply—into words of a single syllable. Look at the Kelts—or people who spoke Keltic languages. Look at the names recorded of the ancient Britons, the Irish, the Gauls!'

'Well, perhaps lengthy names are a sign of barbarism. Some of the native names amongst the black Australians are quite long and complicated. Even that man of mine, Kunapippi—though I don't think that the white Australians did much better in insisting on his calling himself Peter Jackson. . . . Well, now, I want to go in and hear Sackwith speak—he ought to be up pretty soon, and you have finished your coffee, so I will say good-bye.'

CHAPTER XVI

ARDNEY AND DULCIE

YOU are expecting by this time to find Rupert installed in Ministerial office. But you have still to be disappointed. He had certainly made some impression on the mind of Sir Godfrey Seabright, but nothing about him appealed to the imagination, the liking, the sympathy of the great potencies of the Liberal Party—the already mentioned Mr. Sackwith (and Lady Margaret) or Mr. Llewellyn Jones. Both, if they thought about him, remembered his earlier phase of Conservatism in Home policy and his friendship with the lesser Conservative leaders. Australia as a Continent, moreover, had hardly swum into the consideration of these statesmen or their colleagues. Her problems had not shaken their minds like the growing conflict between Ulster and Irish Ireland, the threatened trouble between Germany and France, the Suffrage for Women, or the Adulteration of Milk.

Rupert and Lady Adeliza received formal invitations to the parties given by Lady Margaret for the Liberal Party, and they generally went to them, if only to understand her as a social force of the day, and her position relative to the Suffrage cause. Rupert, indeed, once intervened rather adroitly to protect her from a savage attack of a foolish and clownish kind at the foot of her own staircase, but received such slight thanks for doing so, as to cause him to feel she had suspected him of collusion with

the two Suffragettes. And after he had hurled one of the two women aside, and she had caught at her breast with a momentary gasp of pain, he had recognized his own sister Peggy; who had never reflected on her brother's politics or expected to find Rupert there. Mr. Sackwith and his colleagues were at this time trying to stem the Suffrage movement by ceasing to prosecute. Police in evening dress, looking very much like other Liberal guests, hustled Peggy and her companion out of the hall and into the street; and there was an end of the episode, except that it led Rupert and Lady Adeliza no nearer to the arcana of the Liberal Party.

It was in the late spring of 1913. Rupert came home one night late from the House of Commons over some wearisome debate which had become entangled with the Suffrage question, Mr. Sackwith's ill temper, Lady Margaret Sackwith's presence in the Ladies' Gallery, Mr. Jones's facile optimism, and Mr. Churchill's naval tactics. He undressed quietly in his dressing-room and passed into his wife's bedroom. She woke at his entry and threw her arms about him. He laid his weary head down on the other pillow. 'What a farce it all seems!' he exclaimed, 'and what a fool I seem to be, wasting my life at its vigorous period over these political shams and subterfuges! Why cannot they give the women the vote and have done with it? I had a talk about it the other day with Rossiter, and we agreed we were disgusted with the Liberal Party.'

The conversation trailed off into sleepiness, the weary Rupert lulled to rest by the magnetism of his wife's caresses.

In the morning, however, as he was shaving, she came into his dressing-room and said, 'I did not want to weary you last night—it would have been inhuman; but I had a letter yesterday from Maud which struck quite a tragic note. She says that she is threatened with cancer—cancer of the breast, and must go into St. Thomas's Hospital for an operation. Isn't it dreadful? And her second child still causes her much anxiety about its health. It is growing something peculiar on its nose or in its nose—I cannot quite make out; and poor Francis is becoming so terribly High, so nearly Catholic, that his Bishop is taking alarm and has asked him to come and talk things over. *What* an unhappy couple they are! Francis, since your father's death, seems positively unmanageable in matters of religion. . . . And—let me break it to you gently—your mother has written to say she is coming up to see you to-morrow on a family matter of importance. I have written back to say if she will come to lunch I will try to detain you here *after* lunch. So *do* honour my intention . . . to be kind to her!'

Rupert kissed his wife for acquiescence.

'You are looking very sad, Mother,' he said, the next day. He had just come in, had greeted her heartily, left her for a few minutes to wash and comb himself, and then come back to have a talk before lunch.

'Well, then, I look what I feel,' said Mrs. Cuthbertson, and a tear or two stole away from her wrinkled eyelids over her furrowed cheeks. 'It is three months since your father died, and I feel as though I should never get over his loss. On top of all this trouble has come the worry—the heartbreak, I might almost say—of moving from the Close, of feeling myself homeless after so many years of happy married life.'

'Don't say "homeless." I cannot bring back Father to life. He was a good old sort, and I respected him; but—if you can bear to hear me say so—there was not much community of thought between us. But, Mother dear, I don't want you to feel yourself alone and stranded. Stay here with us—indefinitely—until you can decide on where to make your home. And tell me all the details of your finances. There is no pension attached to Father's position in the Church, but I always understood that you brought into the common share of the household a considerable income of your own.'

'Nine hundred a year. We thought it quite a fortune when we were first married. It seems very little nowadays, but it helped to educate you all, and to start you out in the world with good prospects. Your father has left me savings which will produce another hundred a year, so that I shall have quite enough to live on, and I am just going to make a new will. It was about that I wanted to consult you. I should like to leave it equally amongst my children, but it would not amount to very much

each, and so, if you do not disapprove, I thought I would leave very little to *you*—perhaps even leave that little share to your children—and bequeath most of what I have got to poor, needy Francis, and to Meredith, who has not got on very well in India, I fear. He has got mixed up, as you know, with a very foolish, headstrong woman. Ardney has laid the foundations of a disgraceful scandal in the Divorce Court some day. He actually wants to hasten the case coming on, though he may have to pay rather heavy damages. The news of it gave your father such a terrible shock that it really was the immediate cause of his death. But Ardney is earning a very high income over his engineering patents.'

'You shall make your will exactly as you choose, and you need not bother about leaving anything to us; only, I should not like you to feel stranded or homeless. And now tell me the details about Ardney's trouble. He came up to see us not long ago, and from what he told me I gathered he was prospering, making money like anything over some development of motor cycles he has patented.'

'He may have patented a motor cycle, but his morals, my dear, are shocking. He is living at Coventry with an actress woman who has run away from her husband, and *he*, partly out of spite, will not divorce her, so that she could marry Ardney if she wanted to; but has just left them in their present position and accepted an engagement with a touring company in South Africa.'

'That 's bad. However, what are *we* to do?

Ardney said not a word about her to me or to Addie, and he has not offered to come and stay with *you*. His morals are probably no worse than other people's ; he has been unfortunate. He probably sinned, if you can call it sin, out of compassion. I dare say the woman came to act at Coventry ; he admired her ; she told him some sad story when he made her acquaintance. However, I am glad you have told me : I will go there and see him, and take him by surprise.'

He did so. It was a brilliant day in May. He had paired with another M.P., and thought he would give himself a holiday of two days, and see if he could not settle Ardney's affairs, and see Coventry at the same time. His youngest brother, Meredith, he heard, was getting into a terrible tangle out in Southern India, also over somebody else's wife—that woman he had questioned him about. 'Why are married women so much more attractive to the unattached male than spinsters ?' was the question he asked himself at intervals on the railway journey. He had to suppose it was because they no longer affected shyness and had ceased to be maidenly coy, and the young white man of the present day had no time for coyness.

He found Ardney at work in the great factory. Rupert, however, would not brook any delay in the way of a plain talk. He said :

'I am coming home with you to lunch.'

'But we 'll lunch at the Station Hotel. You would not care about the food at my diggings, and

I don't think the landlady could produce anything worth eating at an hour's notice.'

'Yes, but the lady who is living there with you could do so, or would try to do so.'

'Oh then, you have heard . . . all about my tangle?'

'I have heard what Mother had to tell me, and you ought to realize she is growing old, and you seem to have done something that has made her miserably unhappy. Perhaps I shall not take the same point of view, but I felt it was time for me to come along and inquire into your proceedings—as you are my brother.'

'Well, then, I will make a clean breast of it. This woman—Dulcie is her stage name: whether it was the name she was christened by, I cannot tell, but it does not matter. Well, then, Dulcie caught my fancy *peculiarly*, when she acted here last Christmas. She came here again at Easter. I had got to know her, and she began to tell me about her troubles. When she was here last month she said her husband had gone off at a moment's notice to play in some piece at Johannesburg, and had left her little or no money to keep house on. Somehow she got the soft side of me. I ought perhaps to have thought of nothing except my business, especially as we are just about to patent a wonderful invention I have made—motor cycles, don't you know. But she got the soft side of me, and I thought, "Well, she seems really a decent sort of girl; I dare say her husband 's a rotter and would like to get shut of her, and, when

he hears I have taken her, will be only too glad to divorce her. I don't care much about society—don't care anything, in fact. I will marry her as soon as she is free, and the people who want cycles and agricultural machinery, and the other things we turn out, won't care a hang about my wife's previous history. Nor will you either, nor any other person that matters—after two or three years. I am making pots of money nowadays; and when I have put by thirty or forty thousand pounds I shall be ready to retire and perhaps go in for farming.'

'But Mother says the husband of this lady won't divorce her; he will just remain quiet out in South Africa till he finds some other woman he would like to marry, and keep you waiting until then.'

'Well, if he does so, I shall grind my teeth a bit; but it will not make any difference. Our first child, so to speak, must be born out of wedlock. I really do like her—I tell you, come along and see her if you want to judge.'

They went, and Rupert had to admit to himself that Dulcie was not 'half bad.' Her story about her people might have been all fiction; but from her accent, her style of dress, and the look in her face, Rupert thought she must have come of decent folk; and as to her age, she declared she was only twenty-five, and seemed to be speaking the truth.

At any rate, as he got into the train the next day to return to London, he said to himself, 'Ardney is apparently making plenty of money, and won't be

likely to come down on me for more, and that is the main consoling fact about his morals.'

'What *is* the trouble about Meredith, Mother?' he said, when he had told her all he could tell about Ardney and his Dulcie.

'Well, Meredith, whom you saw yourself—where was it? in Ceylon or Southern India?—when you were on your way out to Australia—fell into the snares of some horrid married woman. I think she is the wife of his superior officer in forestry, who does not seem to care two straws what she does. She took a particular fancy to Merrie soon after he came out, and now that he is appointed to a place with a name I can never remember correctly'—(Rupert: 'Viznagapatam?')—'she goes and stays with him there—a week at a time at his bungalow—and goes out with him shooting in the bush, and every one in the Madras Presidency is shocked beyond belief, except her husband . . .' (her tears ineffectually wiped away) '. . . *I* don't know how it is all going to end. I suppose eventually he will lose his post and come down on us to support him. I think you and Francis are the only good sons I have had. All this would have broken your father's heart. It is a mercy—in one way—that he is dead.'

'Well, I don't want to seem captious in not agreeing with you. Father was not yet seventy-five when he did die. I don't know if Canons in the Church of England have a retiring age? I think not. At any rate, he would have been allowed some sort of retiring pension, and he was still a vigorous man

and had developed a passion for gardening, which would have given him pleasure for some years yet—But these reflections are fruitless, and will only pain you. Meredith, at any rate, is seven or eight thousand miles away, and must work out his own destiny. Ardney does not require monetary help from you or me. By and bye you 'll see he 'll marry this Dulcie, and five years hence she 'll be coming to stay with you ' — (Mrs. Cuthbertson ejaculates a vehement ' No ! ')—' coming to stay with you, and bringing Ardney's child for his grandmother to see. The only one left to embarrass you will be naughty Peggy. And you 'll have a thousand a year to entertain her on, though Addie and I will take care she doesn't bother you. We told you, didn't we, how we were actually there, at Downing Street, when she and Miss Japes—I think it was—tried to annoy Lady Margaret ? It was actually *I* that flung Peggy off ! Meantime you stay with us, get comforted, and help Addie with her children.'

One day Rupert picked up the *Times* to glance at its main features, and a paragraph on the fourth page at once arrested his attention :

THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

We understand that the autumn session of this Society will commence with the reading of an interesting paper by Mr. Carl Brandes. Mr. Brandes is technically—we suppose—a subject of Holland, but he has spent a good deal of his active life in the interior of Eastern Australia. He has recently

revisited Northern Queensland and the north of Australia, as well as New Guinea, and is proposing to address the Society on the subject of his travels: Mr. Brandes is a great anthropologist, but he has a very poor opinion of the black Australian, and says some of the tribes have no more intelligence than will just permit them to light a fire.

Carl Brandes? Rupert was pretty well versed in all Australian matters, except perhaps some affecting the West only, but he recalled no great writer or traveller of the name of Brandes. Carl? What did that suggest? Why, that unspeakable brute who had tried to kill Kunapippi and had dogged Rupert's footsteps for a year or more in Eastern Australia. Fazakerly only had a short term in prison for trying to burgle his apartments. He probably got it shortened by extra good behaviour, and through the callousness with which any attack on an aborigine is viewed by most Australian magistrates. Could 'Brandes' and 'Fazakerly' be one and the same person? He had a vague remembrance there was some association of the surnames in Java. He must go round to the Society and inquire.

He saw the secretary. The secretary was extremely busy, but was pressed into respect for his interviewer because he was an M.P., was reputed to be well off and to know a good deal of Australia. Rupert came straight to his point: who was this Anglo-Dutch Australian traveller?

'Why, Brandes, of course.'

'Yes, but is that really the surname?'

'Could not say, I am sure. Only saw the man the other day. Thought his paper very interesting, though he is rather down on the natives, the black people, I mean. Why don't you come? Hear him, and then add remarks of your own?'

Rupert said 'I will,' declined an invitation to dine at the Australian Club where Brandes was to be the guest, but went to the lecture-hall punctually, and sat in one of the front seats. At eight o'clock, in walked the president, the lecturer, and the components of the preliminary dinner. And the lecturer —sure enough—was Carl Fazakerly. As he mounted the few steps that led up to the platform, his eye met Rupert's, and his rather sallow, sunburnt face lost all the warmth of its complexion. He had forgotten that Rupert must have returned to England. He went through his address, however, but in a very halting and dispirited manner. He had intended in its course to draw a damning picture of the black Australians, to depict them as carrying off white Australian women into the bush, killing and probably eating white Australian children, and generally misconducting themselves in every possible way; and at the same time had intended to picture the tropical lands in which they still lived as eminently suited to a style of European settlement common to Dutch Malaysia. In the *résumé* of his address, already in print, he had summed up his opinion of them—and this remark had already been quoted by a leading London newspaper: 'The natives of Northern Australia only differ from the ape

in possessing the knowledge of how to light a fire.'

At the end of the discourse the chairman remarked that they had present one of the most distinguished Anglo-Australians of the day, Mr. Cuthbertson, who would perhaps favour them with additional remarks on the subject of the paper. Rupert rose up, feeling, curiously enough, something almost pity for the abject lecturer, who — what ever his schemes may have been—seemed hardly to expect this *dénouement*.

'I believe,' he said, 'I have met the lecturer in Australia. He may even have been in the employ of the mining company in which I have been so long interested. I wish, however, to say this: that my experiences of Australia date from 1891. I have not visited every portion of the country described by the lecturer, but my acquaintance with the whole subject of his address is—if I may say so—I do not want to waste your time— more extensive, even profound, than his has been. I have even—strange to say—seen the outside of the plantation in Java where, I believe, Mr. Brandes'—fixing the lecturer with his eye—'was born and brought up. I cannot—I have no desire to—controvert his remarks about New Guinea, but I entirely differ from him in his estimate and opinions on the native race of Australia, the "black people," as he calls them; though their skin colour is not black, and, if it were, would not affect my own opinion of the northern and eastern parts of this fifth continent. This people is one of

the most interesting races alive at the present day. It represents—very likely—the type of man that may have inhabited Britain and the rest of Europe two hundred and fifty thousand years ago. It once inhabited India, and drifted eastwards through Malaysia to the continent it now occupies. Its numbers in Australia are now much reduced from what they were a hundred years ago ; but the extent of its physical difference from the European type of man can be measured—that is to say, diminished—through the facility with which hybrids between the two types have arisen. Even the Tasmanians—supposed to be a very low type of Papuan Negro—interbred freely with the incoming Europeans—Englishmen, Irishmen—who nevertheless killed them off. There are two or three thousand Tasmanian half-castes inhabiting the smaller islands between Tasmania and the mainland. In the same way, but to a much greater degree, hybrids between the so-called " black " Australians and the white people populate much of Eastern Australia, and are becoming a distinctly useful portion of the population as assistants to sheep-farmers, cattle-breeders, miners, and timber-cutters. I hope Mr. Brandes if he returns to Australia will recommence his studies with these facts in his mind.'

Rupert, when he sat down, was rather astonished at what he had said. His first impulse had been to identify Carl Brandes with Carl Fazakerly, and crudely to tell of his scuffle with Kunapippi and the results that followed. But the sight of the man's

face had awakened pity, a pity he could not defend in his own mind.

The meeting broke up, rather as a failure in the minds of the small and mystified audience. No lectures on Australia, even from the most virtuous point of view, were ever well attended in those pre-war days—there was no big game to be shot there, and no reliable information was ever given on the jealously-guarded mineral wealth or on the vicissitudes of sheep-farming. But as soon as the mumbling of the president's last words had ceased and the audience was adjusting coats and wraps, Rupert had made his way to the table on the dais and had said to Carl Brandes, 'Come and see me at my office in the City to-morrow morning about eleven. Here 's the address. I should like to have a short talk with you.' Brandes took the card and said he would.

He did so. The London office of the Borderland Mining Company had a front of chaste architectural design in Queen Victoria Street; and Rupert, to judge from the respect with which his card was received, was evidently a personage there of great distinction. Carl Brandes was shown into his especial room.

'Well, now,' Rupert began when the door had been discreetly closed, 'sit down, and we will talk over the whole thing calmly. You remember as well as I do the circumstances under which we last met. I was so incensed by your coming over here and talking in the way you have done about the aborigines and their only differing from the apes in being able to

light a fire, and all the other nonsense you talked about, that at first I felt inclined to get up and tell the audience of your attack on my native servant and your attempt to force your way into my rooms: but something—I don't know what—excited my pity when I saw in your face consternation at meeting me again, so I spared you. I always believed that you tried to shoot—heaven knows why!—the unfortunate Kunapippi, who, one way and another, behaved with the greatest devotion to me on that extraordinary inland journey. Therefore you will understand that I regarded you last night with the strongest prejudice. I think, if anything, I was touched and turned round in recollecting the extraordinary coincidences of our acquaintance. It was due to a mere accident that I visited Java in 1906, and a similar accident that Dr. Moffenland should have driven me from the Botanic Gardens, past the wall of your father's plantation—for I suppose he was your father, since you have now resumed his surname?'

'Well, he was always assumed to be my father, though I dare say Fazakerly was really that. I took Fazakerly's surname as I was brought up under it as a boy, but after I returned to Java I found he was dead; so I lived a short time with my mother before she returned to Holland, and as I had had that unfortunate experience in Australia, I decided to take the surname of her first marriage. Well, now, what are you going to do?'

'That depends very much on you. I suppose you

have not come to London merely to deliver this lecture and then return to Dutch territory—for you are a Dutch citizen, I imagine?'

'I do not quite know what I have come for except to make some money. I have got one or two rather good propositions to put before the investing public regarding concessions, rubber plantations, and other things, in the Dutch Indies.'

'Well, as to that, I should advise you to go to your own country, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and try to persuade the Dutch to develop their own empire. I wish you in that respect every success, but I do not seem to like the idea of your returning to Australia.'

'Oh, as to that, I have no great desire to go back there. But will you make it worth my while to promise not to go?'

'If you are in any actual distress, I will give you—or lend you, if you prefer to regard it as a loan, and if you will sign the acknowledgment I will write out—I will lend you a hundred pounds. That will take you back to Java when you have finished your negotiations in Holland. But the money will only be paid to you through one of my clerks here, at Victoria Station, when he is assured that you are starting to return to Holland. If you carry out this understanding honestly, and *really* form the company you have in view, I might even at a later date give you further assistance. If, on the other hand, you attempt to deceive me and evade this understanding, I shall not only give you no further assistance of any kind, but I shall place the facts of our former

association before both the Dutch and the English police.'

Carl Brandes, who had been gazing sulkily at the floor, looked up and said, 'Well, I agree. I will give your scheme a trial.'

He brushed his hat with his coat sleeve, nodded to Rupert, and walked out.

The war came later on to interrupt this as well as many other affairs, but the proposition in general turned out more satisfactory than might have been expected. Fazakerly formed his company, Rupert bought and paid for a small proportion of its shares, and at the present day it has struggled into dividend-bearing success. Fazakerly has married a Dutch-woman, and has forgotten by now his dislike of the Australoid race.

CHAPTER XVII

BACK TO AUSTRALIA

IT was the night of 14th May 1914. Rupert had been detained till rather late in the City, and regained his home in Regent's Park after six. He looked into his wife's bedroom as he was passing into his dressing-room.

'I expect you have been worried over my absence —tell you by-and-bye what caused it. I 'll be dressed in time.'

Addie was being inducted by her maid into an unusually beautiful dinner-dress. They were just about to start for the House of Commons, where, with other notabilities, they had been invited to attend a banquet given by the Foreign Office to a great international conference then meeting in London. It was a conference at which some five important nations were represented, to adjust, in reality, German oversea ambitions: the last attempt made before the outbreak of the Great War to come to terms between the British Empire, the United States, France, Germany, and Russia over world ambitions. The toughest part of the contest had been between Germany and Russia; for although France and Britain out of weariness and the passionate desire for a peaceful future had been content to forgo claims and ambitions, Russia, which had not only an enormous appetite, but a desire for expansion westward as well as eastward, had shown herself reluctant, almost to the point of provoking war, to admit of any

German claims to political influence over either the Balkan Peninsula or Asia Minor. However, it had been assumed that, on the understanding of a convenient attack of blindness and backturnédness on the part of Great Britain which would admit Russia to a clutch over Persia and the descent to the Persian Gulf, the other concessions to Germany might be swallowed, adjusted.

Rupert, as a somewhat inconvenient M.P. and a strong representative of Australian interests, which brought him into conflict with Germany over New Guinea, had been invited, together with his lady. The dinner was a noteworthy one. The invitations were sent out in the name of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but his place was taken as president of the assembly by an Under Secretary able to talk French, and the French language was made more or less the speech of the evening. The foreign diplomatists noted with gusto the super-excellence of the wines and of the menu. The speeches following the dinner were commendably short, and the guests then made their way to the House of Commons Terrace along the River, where there were ideal conditions to close the evening: a three-quarters moon, a cloudless sky, and the warmth of a fine spell in May. From little iron table to little iron table, at each of which two or three or four diners were seated, sipping faultless liqueurs, smoking cigars and cigarettes, there passed in fussy amiability a great German diplomatist. He was a man who spoke English as fluently as French or German; it was indeed his

home language, for his wife was an American. He looked upon this evening, upon the banquet and its assumed results, as the crown of his career: an assured peace for the White world, a reconcilement of all great ambitions on the part of great nations. France, it was true, *était un peu grincheuse*, but it was hoped, when a year or two had passed and the benefits of this understanding had permeated Germany's veins, that her Emperor might agree to a revision of the Lorraine frontier which would restore to France a number of villages speaking French and not German. At any rate, France was assured of a great empire in Africa.

So the evening stamped itself on Rupert's mind as a great occasion, an historic date.

Then weeks glided away; he was desperately busy over Australian affairs; Addie was occupied with her children, her relations, and her protégés of both sexes and all ages; when there came the crashing news which at first upset so little the British world: the Austrian heir-apparent was showing himself more and more interested in South Slavonic questions, went down to Serayevo to open or to institute something, and—was assassinated.

It was the 28th of June. By the 28th of July a vast, world-enveloping war seemed unavoidable, and became a fact on the 4th of August; and by that time Rupert and Addie and many other distinguished Britons, Germans, French, and Belgians were landed in Australia to take part in a great assembly of the British Ass.—as it was becoming already humourless

and out of date to call for short the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

With them they had taken back to Australia Kunapippi. He was becoming inevitably better known to those around him as Peter Jackson. The extraordinary passion for miscegenation which actuates the women of the white race was making his retention in England too difficult a problem to be solved. In spite of education, the smartening-up of hair-cutting, well-cut clothes, and a never-forgotten toilet, to Rupert it seemed that any marriage with a housemaid, a kitchenmaid, or even a cook would be almost equivalent to linking the Quaternary Period with the present age: he doubted whether it could turn out happily. For an Australoid, Peter Jackson was remarkably light-complexioned and refined in face features; still, there was the overhanging brow, there were the large white teeth and somewhat prominent muzzle. His very adroitness of movement, his quietness and dog-like good humour—no, it was unthinkable that he could become the husband of a housemaid and the father of her hybrid children. He must be taken back to Australia, and a great effort be made to settle him down there with a half-caste or a Kanaka wife.

So he accompanied Rupert and Addie, and they found him a deft and quiet attendant.

Their hostess in Australia was of course to be Justina. From her house on the sea coast near Long Bay they could motor daily into Sydney and attend the meetings, and after the main business

of the British Association was over they could make a few other long excursions. Janet and her husband would probably go into Sydney just to attend the first few days of the Association meetings; or if she could not get away, they could make the journey to Brisbane to see her.

The journey out, except for the July heat of the Red Sea, was a great joy. Steamer passages had in the first six months of 1914 reached a climax of enjoyability, at any rate between the spring and the autumn. So as not to be worried with the French Customs, they had joined their steamer at Southampton. There was the coasting past the summer shores of northern Spain and Portugal, the little excitement of Gibraltar, and the opposite scenery of the Moorish coast; then the wonders, the beauty of the old buildings at Valletta; then glimpses of snow-tipped alps in Crete, and shortly afterwards the Suez Canal. The Red Sea was stiflingly hot, but they clothed themselves accordingly. There was the mild gambling each day on the length of the ship's run; and Aden, with its handsome, mop-headed Somalis, its singularly Biblical-looking Jews, its fine, handsome Arabs from the interior mountains, its baboons, zebra colts, wild asses, leopards and lions from Somaliland, offered for sale: though seen by them before, Aden seemed perpetually novel in its sights and mysteries.

Bombay, with its lunch at the Governor's palace; Colombo and the hurried glimpse at the ancient monuments of Ceylon; and from Colombo the quick

run through smooth seas, so smooth, even, that the white clouds or the sunsets in the sky were reflected around them ; and when they landed at Sydney and descried Justina and her husband standing amongst the crowds waiting to receive them, Addie turned to Rupert and said, ' This is scarcely the close of our second honeymoon.'

Adelaide Scatterson, now Adelaide Summers, came to greet them almost as soon as they arrived in Sydney. She had married six years before a rich Australian squatter and sheep-owner, James Godfrey Summers. Rupert dimly remembered meeting him in the rather anxious days of 1907. So far as Adelaide's father could be said to have a neighbour, when the nearest portion of that neighbour's land was eighteen miles distant, Summers occupied that position. He had long worshipped Adelaide from a distance ; and some months after Rupert's departure in 1907 she had shown herself more aware of his adoration. He proposed, therefore, and they were married in 1908. By 1914 she had become the mother of two children, and presented them to Lady Adeliza Cuthbertson with effusion.

She had brought her husband with her as well, insisting that he should attend the great assembly of the British Association. But when the fell news of the war broke up its meetings, she suggested that her husband should now time his oft-proposed visit to Europe, taking her and her children on the same boat as the Cuthbertsons, and not waiting till the German submarine or gunboat had blocked the traffic

of the British Empire. Jim Summers was not very fully convinced by her arguments; at the same time, an enormous curiosity drew him to accede. Had he not been married, he would have enlisted, as a volunteer to see old England through her difficulties. He helped Rupert over the question of Kunapippi, secured him a place as game-warden or something of the kind on his vast estates, and left strenuous orders with his manager to have him well cared for.

'I cannot say I am as surprised as most of our Australian friends seem to be,' said Rupert to Addie when they saw the cablegrams in the Sydney papers on the morning of 5th August 1914. 'I have, as you know, been dreading war breaking out with Germany ever since 1911, and especially after the breakdown of the official and unofficial conferences in 1912. Yet you remember that dinner-party at the House of Commons? It really seemed then that we had entered on quite a new phase of understanding. You remember von Kühlmann stopping at our table —and didn't he come to dinner with us one night about that time and bring his wife? He seemed so determined that Germany and ourselves should never come to war. I wonder whose fault it is? It looks like the Emperor, first and foremost. . . .

'*Now*, how are we going to get home? *That* is the thought in your mind!—the children. . . .

'And what a *sizzling* there will be! Our German fellow-guests! The von Luschans! It seems absurd,

even cruel, to look upon such people as enemies. I suppose they will be detained here for a time, but I do not see how the authorities are to stop *our* heading straight for home, and all steamer communication cannot be cut off in a moment, unless the British Empire is going to pieces. We will have a try, at any rate.'

So they got away in a very crowded P. & O. steamer, charged to the full with passengers who at all costs had to be back in Europe. Except for its discomfort, the voyage was uneventful, and they were landed at Southampton without any accident supervening. Addie's joy at regaining her Regent's Park house and her five children seemed immeasurable.

'I feel I ought to go round giving presents to all manner of people, subscriptions to all manner of causes.'

However, there was no lack of pressure on her generosity. Maud needed advice and assistance. Peggy had dropped the Suffrage agitation and was training as a war nurse. Dorothy was distractedly anxious over her husband's health. He had descended from the high domain of science, from pondering over mating-fastidiousness in the beetles, palaeontological research, the consideration of a flaw he thought he had discovered in spectrum analysis; and had offered himself to the authorities as a recruit! It was in contemplation to send him over to the United States to lecture on the causes of the war. All Addie's brothers at home, and two of Rupert's, had enlisted for war service. Herbrand, now about thirty-eight,

had become a colonel, and had gone over to France with a cavalry regiment. Irita, in between intervals of crying, was a more than ever devoted stepmother to the two children of the other marriage, and an adoring mother to her own baby. She was littering the floor of the first and second stories of No. 8 Hanover Terrace with what she imagined to be lint. Her energies, like those of many other bewildered, passionately anxious, affectionate women, required to be regularized.

And so with all the other relations. Francis began to offer himself as a chaplain in France; Maud, shaken up with horror at the war, pretermitted her threatenings of deadly disease and talked of ambulance work when she returned from Vittel. What was Rupert to do?

The Colonial Office, whom he consulted, would have sent him out as a lecturer in America, and would have lost him somewhere in the middle of the United States. It also suggested he might return to Australia, dodging the German submarines; or go out to East Africa; or have a shot at Palestine.

He felt instinctively that this was an occasion whereon it was better that he and Addie should not be separated: the war would be long; he would be best fitted to help if he lived at first in London, attended Parliament, and worked hard at some home undertaking—something to do with producing or distributing food, ammunition, clothing, guns, or aeroplanes.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GREAT WAR

'IT is as I feared, Rupert,' said his mother when she had come downstairs. 'Merrie has been dismissed by the Indian Government or the Governor of Madras—whoever looks after forestry affairs in southern India. It has all been, of course, on account of this horrid woman.'

'Well, then, is he now saddled with her to keep and look after?'

'Oh, no; it seems in actuality she only twice came to visit him at his bungalow, and then brought a female friend with her, and *she* has gone back to her husband quite unperturbed. In fact, I think they have started for England to spend their leave here. But poor Merrie is out of it and utterly in despair. So he has enlisted—I think he is going to get an officer's commission—and has gone to Bombay, and from there he thinks they will send him to Mesopotamia.'

'Oh well, then we can do no more. The war may help to solve that difficulty, as it has not a few others.'

As a matter of fact, though the details never reached publication, Meredith had committed himself very far with Mrs. Atlee. She had taken a great liking to him when he had first arrived in southern India and had worked as a subordinate under her husband's direction. Her husband—considerably older than herself—had married her during a pro-

tracted leave of absence in England, married her—a rather thoughtless, pretty girl, the daughter of a prosperous auctioneer in a snug country town, whom he had met in the society of the place associated with his family on its outskirts. The passion of his own being was expended on Indian botany, and as long as his wife kept the bungalow nice in appearance, and the Indian servants in order and fair efficiency, and presented him with meals that were fit to eat, he concerned himself less and less with how she spent her leisure time, what friends or acquaintances she made. She did not seem likely to have any children by him, and he was not sure that he wanted them, or could afford to rear and educate them if they came. His wife—I think her name was Marcella, or she had assumed it—soon began to seek for soul-consolation elsewhere, and decided to get it from Meredith, who had been 'true' to her and irritatingly reticent about her for something like eight years, by which time she was thirty and quite contented with her husband, who was beginning to aspire to a post at Kew.

Meredith had a weary, dreary, haphazard, hurried training of an officer at Bombay. At the end of three months, when he was judged efficient, he was shipped with others of his kind and a large cohort of Indian troops through the Persian Gulf to Basra. Thence he passed up-stream to Baghdad. Near the end of the war, when he was developing into a really smart officer and beginning to see hope of a good career rising above an horizon still clouded by reminiscences of Mrs. Atlee, he was shot by one of the last

stragglers of the Turkish troops near Nineveh, and died in the camp hospital. His mother felt the loss acutely, and gradually all the remembrance of his past errors and mistakes faded into oblivion, and she spoke of him proudly as a hero. Nay, more: Mrs. Atlee, whose husband was now Assistant Deputy something or other at Kew, saw the account of his death in the paper, found out his mother's address, and wrote her a charming letter of sympathy; asked leave to call; received it; shed a few real tears in decorous remembrance of the poor boy; and said—which greatly consoled the easily satisfied 'poor boy's' mother—that her husband was as distressed as herself over Meredith's death, at the very end of the war, and had determined to commemorate him in a new species of yam sent home from the South Indian jungles—*Dioscorea meredithi*. At this point Mrs. Cuthbertson gave way freely to tears, and Mrs. Atlee was numbered henceforth in her slender circle of intimate acquaintances.

Maud Cuthbertson, the dolorous wife of the Rev. Francis, had, as already mentioned, been stricken in 1913 with cancer in the breast. She had had, however, a successful operation at St. Thomas's Hospital, and the ravages of the dread malady were stayed: there was seemingly no recurrence. But in 1914 she was brought to death's door by arterio-scleritis, or something of the kind. At Rupert's expense, and with the greatest difficulty at the time the cure was needed, she journeyed out along the edge of the war area to the baths at Vittel, in the east of France.

Here, in the summer of 1915, she went through an expensive treatment. Only, it really seemed to be a cure. Her husband came with her, and volunteered for the post of British chaplain during that summer, when the previous holder of that post—an aged man—had given up his chaplaincy and retired to England.

Vittel was deserted by three-quarters of its patients; otherwise its condition, though most of its doctors had been impressed into the war area, was distinctly beneficial to the stricken mind and body of Maud Cuthbertson, and did her husband an even greater extent of benefit, for it lifted his mind above the poor, paltry fuss about ecclesiastical millinery, and led his thoughts to the far more stringent issues of the war.

The season at Vittel closes with September, for climatic reasons. By that time Maud was asserted to have been cured. Francis escorted her back to English shores, and then boldly offered himself as a chaplain in the war area. He went first to Ypres, but was afterwards moved on in 1917 to Péronne, and here I met him at the beginning of 1918. The change in him was so extraordinary that I could hardly believe it was the same person as the silly curate I had encountered at Littlehampton some nineteen years earlier. Nearly all the nonsense was knocked out of him. His work as a stretcher-bearer on several occasions when the fringe of the fighting brought the Germans unpleasantly near to Péronne—a ruined city by that time—attracted attention and afterwards procured him a decoration, which he now wears on commemorative days at Perivale.

1919 took him on with the troops to Cologne, where his mind grew broader still, and where he occasionally drank a brandy-and-soda — not that I approve of brandies-and-soda : I think he became aware of their dietetic harmfulness, and when he returned to his English cure at Perivale he found good reasons to revert to abstinence from alcohol. Still, Cologne did him a great deal of good in broadening his mind. He made excursions to Bonn, and became quite friendly with great German lights at its university, men who had married English or American wives, who lived in the most delightful houses, so far as picturesque architecture and sanitation were concerned. He found their wives rather hard propositions to tackle in arguments about war-guiltiness ; still, they agreed with him in being as resolutely opposed as he was to any further outbreak of war.

In 1920 he returned to Perivale, where he still lives, to a wife who had just made her way back there from the charge of a hospital for wounded officers, where she had been working in conjunction with Lady Claribel Simmons. Husband and wife seemed to one another changed beings since they had last lived together in 1915, though they had met on previous periods of leave. They were a little shy about expressing their astonishment at the way each had changed, at the new outlook on life which *he* had conceived, and the resolve *she* had formed never again, till she was seventy, to have a dangerous, incurable illness. A kindly, ancient clergyman who had taken over charge of Perivale church during Francis's chap-

laincy abroad, now willingly retired from active work, and Francis resumed his cure. He shortened the services, gradually dropped their fripperies, increased the educational work of his schools, and seemed to the older members of his congregation an altogether different person from the vicar of pre-war days.

None of their children had died in the previous five years. Whether too young or over the age for application, they had all found their ways into war industries, which gave them a fairly wholesome place to sleep in and enough food to eat. Their noses had grown normal; war dentistry had relieved them of most of their teeth troubles; and skin treatment recommended by military-medical consultants (who charged them as war-workers no fee) had diminished, abolished their pimples. A hair-wash of some pungency had a remarkably good effect in turning their daughter Alice's brick-red hair to a beautiful wine colour, which ultimately caused her marriage to a curate. Their eldest son passed into the service of Ardney's engineering firm; their second son, with a cured nose, became a missionary; and their third daughter went on the stage, but quite respectably. That is all I remember about them, except that one or the other might be seen not infrequently at Rupert's house and at Addie's tea-parties.

CHAPTER XIX

CLARIBEL'S SECOND MARRIAGE

THE war had a disastrous effect on Sir Matthew Jacobus's fortunes. Prior to its outbreak—say in May 1914—he had seemed to be on the verge of assured millionhood in sterling coinage. He had, in the background, assisted the Foreign Office over their German negotiations. He was supposed to own about an eighth of the capital of the Dresdner Bank. He was to be seen—by those who had a right to enter—in the most private parlours of the wealthiest Alsatian Jews in the City of London, the children of potentialities which had once been French subjects, furnishing Napoleon III. with lucrative loans. His name in South Africa was almost potent enough, if uttered with assurance and with the correct accent, to obtain you for nothing a first-class railway ticket to Johannesburg at the ticket office of the Cape Town railway station. Its quotation hushed Elder Dempster and Sir Donald Currie, and even attracted a flicker of interest in Wall Street, New York. He waited, day following day, after the House of Commons dinner on 14th May, to read of the signature of a far-reaching German-English Convention which would satisfy and silence France, appease the hostility of sullen Russia, and secure the support of Roosevelt in the United States, silence the Jingoes in the London Parliament, and quiet the Boers in South Africa. Germany would, under thin forms of polite disguise, enter into possession of much of neglected and

poverty-stricken Portuguese East and West Africa; Belgium's vast Congo Empire would shrivel to a discreet patch of rich forest land where the Belgians could intensify rubber plantation and collect a sufficiency of other tropical produce; whilst Germany spread herself, saliva dropping from her mouth in eager appetite, over the great central basin of the Congo. Elsewhere she would absorb the Turkish Empire in Asia and extend to Basra on the Persian Gulf.

All these geographical details were uttered in low tones and accompanied by a rubbing of well-manicured palms. Sir Matthew wished the steps of the Foreign Office or the clicking of its typewriters could advance a little quicker. There was the banquet, at any rate, of 14th May, the portent of which was too discreetly guarded from comment in the half-awakened Press. It had not been attended, presided over, by Sir Godfrey Seabright, who, on the contrary, had gone to the House of Lords as Viscount Ringwood. Sir Matthew thought it would have been far more spectacular, far more telling, if the agreement, the far-reaching treaty, had been definitely signed and published, and Sir Godfrey had *then* been granted his peerage. He fretted and increased his wrinkles as day succeeded day without the finishing of this marvellous agreement being publicly announced. May ended and June began. What were they waiting for? Every detail had been considered and settled. Was it South-West Africa?

Some one said that at the last moment the Colonial Office had raised objection to its continuance under

the German flag; that so large had been the concessions in the matter of the Portuguese colonies that poor, desolate, barren Damaraland and Namakwaland should have been returned to the British Empire. These regions were virtually ours by the cession of Hottentot and Ovaherero in 1873, only we had neglected to instance their formal annexation, and the incredibly silly behaviour of Lord Derby in 1884 had allowed them to be annexed by Bismarck.

During some six weeks of this time of waiting Claribel had shared her husband's suspense and worry. He now seemed quite aged, and no longer preserved the awesome calm of earlier days, when he might have spent the morning discussing a world-shaking political move in Asia, Africa, or South America, and yet have seemed at luncheon only to be concerned with the careful cleaning of the cruets.

Now he had almost abandoned reticence. He would resume it with a thicker coat of blandness when he could place before Clarry's eyes the telegram or the Prime Minister's letter announcing his peerage; when he could show her some confidentially delivered, highly gratifying acknowledgment of his diplomatic skill written by von Kühlmann or Lord Ringwood. And on the 28th of June, which came at last—still nothing signed and sealed between the two empires—occurred a staggering announcement, portentous of doom—the assassination in Serayevo of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his morganatic Duchess, Sophie of Hohenberg.

The continuing steps of the agreement concerning

frontiers and interests in Africa and Asia stopped. Negotiations seemed to be paralysed. Terrible rumours broke in of what the Kaiser had said at Potsdam and Mons. Popovitch had uttered frenziedly in the Russian Legation at Belgrade. And then by the end of July had come the certainty of a German attack on France and Belgium.

By the 4th of August all was over. The now elderly man who on paper in the preceding June had been a multi-millionaire, with the hopes, when the signatures were affixed and an Anglo-German pact was assured, of being a millionaire in coin safely invested, had now dwindled, outside his wife's fund of £100,000, to being the owner at most of two or three hundred thousand pounds of further capital, with liabilities to be met of at least an equal amount. In short, he was a pauper. He would never obtain a peerage, and would be a pensioner on his wife. They might have enough money to retire to his house in Hampshire and breed fancy poultry or play fancy croquet, but the palace at Hampstead must be given up and his magnificent collections therein must be sold.

He was no doubt unduly distraught. Old age had brought on indigestion and other complaints; but having made a rough settlement of his affairs and taken a farewell of his two children, he retired to his sanctum, swallowed a dose of something with three chemical names united by hyphens, but really little else than strychnine, plainly stated; gave a few ghastly, ineffectual gasps and curvatures of the spine, when on second thoughts he had shrunk from this

precipitate action; and then died on his priceless Tabriz carpet.

Claribel was aghast at this wholly unforeseen tragedy. She had not been unduly worried over the non-fulfilment of the expected peerage; it seemed to matter very little, when you had been 'my lady' from your birth onward; and the knighthood seemed to her all he need have aspired to get, since he was a millionaire. But now the after-revelations which began to crowd on her, when Sir Matthew had been certified by his doctor to have died from a heart attack, supervening no doubt on the declaration of war, showed her to be a comparative beggar with little else than her marriage settlement of £5000 a year to live on. Twelve months later, it is true, when his affairs were disentangled, a miserable relic of a thousand pounds a year was realized for the inheritance of his two children; but meantime Claribel had, three months after his death, to give up his gorgeous residence on Hampstead Heath and his country house in North Hampshire to the satisfaction of his creditors' claims. She then retired with her children to a quiet home in west Surrey, put her boy to a boarding-school to prepare him for the Army, and sought for some work connected with the war to distract her mind, lull her sense of utter disappointment in life. In this way she drifted into hospital work, acquired even the qualifications of a nurse, and so found herself attached to the supervision of a Convalescent Home for wounded officers, near Godalming.

To this Home drifted Clarence Simmons in 1916. Besides a bad wound, from which, however, he was steadily recovering, his eyesight had been affected for a while by mustard gas, and his eyes were still protected by a shade. This disability, combined with sheer mental fatigue, sheer puzzlement as to how he was to take up again his connection with the South African mines, and general discontent with his broken life, had left him in a bewildered condition. He looked at none of the nurses to see if they were pretty, because at present he could look at very little with discernment. For the same reason he could not read. None of the names of the other officers, a dozen in number, who shared with him the hospitality of this Rest House were familiar. He did not think to inquire as to the surnames of the nurses, who were mostly transmogrified by the title Sister and the adoption of a Christian name, probably not the one by which they were baptized. He satisfied himself by 'supposing' that things would come right in time. The doctors assured him he would fully recover his sight if he followed their directions, rested his eyes and kept them shaded.

In the middle of these somewhat sad considerations and reconsiderations of his fate and prospects, a voice suddenly struck him as familiar, associated with the past of long ago. It called up recollections of turfy rides along a scattered woodland looking out over fields bright with spring flowers—gorse—budding heather—pools of water, blue with sky reflections. Where was it? Ireland of course, when he was

young, and he was deputed by a Dublin firm to build new waterworks in the Droughty Valley. . . . *Claribel!* The voice was Claribel's out of the past, and yet in the practical present, talking of the composition of arrowroot, of custard, and of the food longings of an omnivorous major. . . .

Clarence was by now a colonel, and he had a bedroom to himself—almost a bed-sitting-room, it could be called, for he was up and dressed in an invalidish costume and reclining on a very comfortable sofa. As he could not read—a nurse every now and then came in and read the papers to him—there were certain games near at hand which he was supposed to be able to play without much strain on the eyes. There was a gramophone, and there were flat cardboard boxes of records. . . . In the middle of these reflections occurred this voice, which sent the blood pulsing once more through his arteries, making him feel better and more hopeful, and his door opened gently, or perhaps it had been ajar all the time, which was why he had heard, and some one came into the room, and in a low tone stammered out some explanation of hitherto absence, and he was pressing the competent hands of the Claribel of long ago.

'*Claribel?*' he gasped in a tremulous voice.

'Clarence!' she answered in more confident tones.

She sat down on the end of his sofa. He sat upright, put a healed arm about her, drew her towards him, and kissed her unresisting face.

'I read somewhere, some time, you had become a widow. I am a bachelor. Whether you marry me or not, I feel I have gone through enough to claim this,' and the 'this' was explained by another kiss.

Claribel at first made no answer. It was a wonderful stroke of fate which had brought him to her Convalescent Station, so wonderful that it seemed like a direct intimation from Fate that the tale of eighteen years ago should be taken up and concluded—concluded happily: for of course they were married—in a month's time—and at the end of a year Colonel Clarence's eyes were as well as they had ever been. The thousand a year he derived from his long-drawn-out work in South Africa and his mining discoveries, inventions, struggles, and savings, was added to Claribel's income, so that they were just able to stomach the taxation of recent years and to lead a wholly happy life. He perhaps continued to earn a trifle more as a consultant of his mining companies, knowing so much as he did about the work in hand, about metallurgy and chemistry. Claribel has had one child by him, whom she loves better than the two others whose father was alien to her tastes; but she does not say so, as her eldest girl is now old enough to be presented, to be wooed and wedded. Her boy by Sir Matthew is taken into some great financial house to lay the foundations of his fortune.

The child of which Clarence is the father is a girl, fortunately, so no rivalries will spring up, and she can become her mother's companion and close

associate when the eldest daughter is married and out in the world.

'I am afraid we are having a lot of bother with your Australians in Egypt,' said a harassed-looking Under Secretary of State to an equally harassed-looking Rupert in a lobby of the House of Commons.

'What, you mean as to their behaviour in Egypt?'

'Yes, they have smashed the Turks effectively. Quite put an end to any idea of a Turco-German invasion of Egypt. But their procedure towards the native Egyptians is very bad, and Allenby is frightened to have them sent into Palestine for fear they will depopulate the country even if they *do* chase out the Turks.'

'Yes,' said Rupert sadly. 'I am less surprised perhaps than you are. I always deprecated their being sent there. They should all have been reserved for the most difficult fighting in the most civilized regions. Their courage is of the highest—unquestionable. Their physique is the finest perhaps in the British Army. They are eminently fit to measure themselves against the best of the German troops. They have as much "savvy" as the most cunning Germans, more individuality, man for man, and that prevents their following up a bad lead if they can think of a better.'

'Well, look here, I am talking to you like a desperate man. Wouldn't *you* go out if we appointed you in some capacity, and try to solve the difficulty? Go out to Egypt and help in rounding up

the Australians and sending them elsewhere; or convert and lead them yourself? They ought to respect *you*.' Rupert reflected for a minute or two—I use this term of time conventionally. Had he really remained silent for more than one hundred and twenty seconds, the Under Secretary would have left him, fearing that a fit was coming on. The phrase only means that he did not reply for ten counted seconds. Then he said, 'Yes, I will.'

And in the autumn of 1917, after recruiting in some capacity or with some excuse his brother-in-law, Dr. Manders, he started for France. They landed at Boulogne without incident, magnificently escorted, as steamer passengers were, by a fleet of war vessels. From Boulogne they joggled along to Paris, where hope of a successful issue from the war was beginning—slightly—to revive, though it was to have a terrible slump in the following spring. From Paris they travelled to Marseilles without incident or annoyance.

'I don't know how you think, Stephen,' said Rupert, 'but although it is not quite so quick, railway transit to Marseilles at any rate is much pleasanter than it had become just before the war, especially for privileged persons like ourselves, with red passports and bags of despatches, though I dare say these contain nothing that would be worth robbing.'

At Marseilles, after one night in an hotel on the Cannebière, they embarked on an English steamer of an important oceanic line, with numerous other

military and diplomatic personages, bound—at any rate for Malta, if not intercepted by a German submarine. At Malta they had to pause for several days till messages from here, there, and everywhere were weighed and considered; and after five days' hesitation the steamer pursued her course (hugging the south coast of Crete) for Alexandria. Here their immediate dangers were over, and they landed thankfully.

But despite Rupert's commission as an agent of the Government, they were in for a good deal of discomfort during the first week or two. There was a large section of the Australian troops encamped near Ramleh and consequently near Alexandria. Rupert had really only taken Stephen Manders with him because he thought where he was in his war work in an English county he was doing little good and getting very fretful. He did not feel that he would be much use in Egypt, but taking him there would keep him out of mischief and give him a chance for which he longed, almost more than he did for English victory in the war—the chance to inspect the fossil-bearing Tertiary strata round about the shrunken lake of Birkat-al-Qurun. The Sanusi's Beduin raiders and ravagers had been effectually driven away from the western confines of Egypt, and probably Manders would find the area of Al Faiyūm quite quiet and open to his investigations, whilst Rupert dealt with the affairs of the Australian troops. So having secured for him guides, an interpreter, a sufficient following of servants and porters, and a small escort

of Egyptian soldiers, Rupert packed him off and applied himself resolutely to the consideration of Australian defects.

'Now, what is all the fuss about that agitates the Home Government?' he asked from the leading Australian commander—really a British-born officer who had been a good many years in Australia and had controlled and led with conspicuous success a large Australian contingent which had been to Gallipoli, Salonika, and elsewhere.

'Well, it is just this. Our boys can't get it out of their heads that Egypt 's been mixed up *against* us in the war, that it somehow fought on the side of the Turks, and that all the Egyptians have been hostile. Then again, because they are Mahommedans. . . .'

'Well, let 's be accurate as we go along,' said Rupert. 'A million and a half or more of the Egyptians are Christians—Copts, don't you know?—and the others call themselves, as they always do, Muhammadans.' He paused and wrote the word down. 'I know all this sounds pedantic, but we can't afford to be otherwise than accurate in all matters concerning this war.'

'Jus' so. Well, our Aussies have got a prejudice against the, what do you say?—Mu-ham-madans? They don't like the Afghans, and I believe *they* are Mahometans—I can't get used in a minute to the new pronunciation——'

'It is not a new pronunciation; it is the old; that 's all; but ever since the uprise of Islam . . .'

'What 's Islam?—though all this seems to me waste of time.'

'I dare say, but I wanted to start fair. Islam is what the Arabs and Turks and Egyptians generally call their religion. It 's a dam' silly one, as are nearly all religions, seen from our present standpoint —but I don't know that it 's any sillier than most forms of Christianity, and the people believe in its silly aspect far more conscientiously than we do in ours. You must bring this home to your boys—as you call them—though some of them seem to me very near middle age. Don't cut up rough at the way I am talking. I was not born in Australia any more than you were, but I have spent nearly as much of my life in that country as you have, and I am quite as proud of it, fond of it, interested in it, as you could possibly be. In fact, but for Australia I should be an utter nobody. I don't want to waste more time than I can possibly help. If you could give me the chance to talk to your men—how many have you got here?——'

'About 2500, but altogether I should think there are 16,000 in Egypt. I can tell you where all the five or six encampments are.'

'Well, if you could give me the chance of talking to each encampment, I will try to make the best of my opportunities. The facts we have got to remember are that White Australia furnishes perhaps almost the best troops in the British Army. Canada comes very near, but it strikes me from what I have heard that Canadians are a bit more lawless than the

Australians. The very best portion of the British Army—mark you, the very best—is recruited from the eastern and northern Midlands of England and from southern Scotland. They 'll take a *lot* of beating, you will see, and will come out on the very top at the end of the war. Londoners are almost as good. And yet, for some situations in hot countries like this I would sooner have Australians behind me. . . .

'Well, we have only been talking for half an hour, though it seems much longer. Find some level-headed, calm, reliable man to take your place here for a month, and journey with me all over Egypt, wherever there may be any force of Australians, and let me have a talk to them. Allenby wants them to come back and join him in Palestine, but I think they had better hear what I have got to say and take it in before they go.'

The general officer shrugged his shoulders, and went off to order a carefully prepared luncheon for Rupert and himself at mess. The next day they started on their round of the camps.

Rupert's most critical task lay near Suez, where the Australian contingent had become distinctly rumbustious. He first of all pitched in to the officers in a discourse which he arranged to deliver after luncheon, when all who smoked had started smoking. The luncheon had begun at the strange hour of eleven, so that in the fierce heat which ranged between twelve and three the officers, so far as military duties permitted, might retire to shade and coolness for a sleep.

'Now, look here, friends,' he began. 'I won't address you as "boys," or go to the formality of "gentlemen"—that sounds too eighteenth-century—and you are most of you past the age of boyhood, which at any rate terminates at twenty-one; besides which, even a real boy in years has become grown-up after a voyage from Australia and after he has come within the fighting area. . . .

'Well, Australia has taught you a good deal, as it has me, but it has not taught you sufficiently the tasks of the British Empire. We white people of Great Britain and Ireland, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, and the one or two hundred thousand of us who rule India, aspire to dominate something like thirteen, fourteen *million* square miles of the world's surface; and this Empire not only contains some sixty millions of white people like ourselves, but also fourteen or fifteen millions of whitey-browns, fifty or sixty millions of black people, and considerably over three hundred millions—I can't remember the exact figure—it may be 320,000,000—of yellows and browns. And for the last hundred years, missionaries first of all, and then the British Government itself, have been hard at work, trying to educate these blacks, browns, yellows, and whitey-browns, who outnumber us enormously. We who are purely white in our skin colour are on an average slightly stronger and better developed in our bodies. Any one of your men, especially, is in strength and adroitness the equal of two Egyptians—at least. Well, now, as you will see on reflection, this war is

positively fratricidal. It is a war of White against White, started by the insensate Emperor of Russia and the vain, swollen-headed Emperor of Germany —may they both die and be ground to powder for the ghastly misery they have brought about. You come here to help your kinsmen of England and Scotland, who are being threatened with utter ruin by the German Emperor, now he has downed the Russian Tsar. Here you are, halted in Egypt for the time being, because Egypt contains the Suez Canal, the most sensitive nerve of the British Empire. So far, at any rate, the twelve millions of Egypt have *not* risen against us, but your men are making them wish they had, suggesting to them that they might —because you are treating them as a conquered people.

'Now, I will have a talk to your men before I go—I don't want my talking to be shouted at them on the parade ground. I would like to move quietly amongst them at their meal times and in the evening. I am not here to issue orders; I only want as a fellow-Australian who has travelled more perhaps than they have done to get them to view the whole subject from my standpoint; and I want you not only to forgive me for having talked so long and kept you from your siesta, but to look at the whole subject from my point of view, only because I believe that to be the safest for the British Empire.

'Now, thank you for not having interrupted me, and I shall thank you still more heartily if I find you are all in agreement with me. Let 's finish the war with

a complete victory, and then get back to the task of making Australia the finest continent in the world.'

This conclusion we may now coldly esteem as a bit of claptrap ; but at the time it was spoken it appealed to the Australian officers. Most of these had heard of Rupert and the Borderland Mining Company.

He carried out his plan of addressing their men, with equally good results. Then, when he had visited in turn every assemblage of Australian fighters in Egypt, and had passed on into Palestine with the growing tide of victory which was to eliminate the Turks and Germans from everywhere south of Asia Minor, he returned to the Nile Delta to collogue with his brother-in-law, Branksome, whom he found in Cairo.

He was a little nettled at the manners Branksome had acquired by more than ten years' service in Egypt. There had of course been leave of absence in England, during which he and Addie had seen him at Sussex House. Branksome had married just before the war the daughter of a senior diplomatist in Egypt, but she had returned to England in 1915 to be carefully tended in a confinement. Branksome by now had almost become, or almost fancied himself, the senior official at the Agency in Cairo, or the Legation, as it may have been called by now, the war having abolished the fiction of Turkish suzerainty.

Branksome of course offered his brother-in-law full hospitality and accommodation at the palace which had been built for Lord Cromer on the out-

skirts of Cairo; but Rupert nevertheless felt nettled at his Foreign Office manner, as it was assumed to be. He himself had little knowledge of Arabic, though with a gift for understanding languages he had picked up by now quite a smattering of the Egyptian dialect; but he very much doubted whether Branksome had any more efficient knowledge, doubted very much whether he could conduct or understand a rapid conversation in that speech with Egyptian officials; felt sure that in the main he only conversed with them in French, and probably required the services of an interpreter when he was dealing with the common people. Branksome, moreover, had started wearing an eyeglass, a trick which Rupert, no doubt irrationally, had grown to detest and mock at. He felt that underlying all Branksome's tricks of manner was the intimated assumption that every one not permanently in Foreign Office service was an inferior being, to be given food and drink perhaps, to be humanly and kindly treated, but always to be overruled.

So, with home cares on his mind, Rupert was not anxious to extend his service on the wrong side of the Mediterranean. He had fulfilled the objects of his commission; he regained France with one or two narrow squeaks of disaster—off Crete, or between Sardinia and Corsica—and arrived in London just in time to receive the crushing news of the Germans' defeat of our Fifth Army, and their seemingly irresistible march on Paris.

Stephen Manders should have met Rupert at

Cairo to return with him, but during his searches for fossils in the Faiyūm depression he had discovered the shoulder-bone of a Moeritherium and a skull, in fragments, of an Eocene progenitor of the Whales, and this piece of good fortune had caused him to miss the connection. His return to England was much delayed by one cause and another, and Branksome Parkyns was positively rude to him at last, because he littered the approaches to his bedroom at the Agency with Eocene remains—'*Not* Eocene, I keep telling you,' said Stephen; '*Oli*gocene!'

CHAPTER XX

THE SETTLING-UP AND SETTLING-DOWN

AND then the winding up after the war terminated with the Armistice of 1918! The Scattersons went back to Australia, so that their children might grow up there. Four years' life in England had toned down Adelaide considerably. She was no longer a reckless horsewoman. Something to do with the bearing of her children had interrupted equine exercise and caused her to be careful about shakes and twists. Work in the war hospitals had sobered much of her reckless gaiety.

Francis Cuthbertson, as already related, had come back on brief leave from the war at the Armistice in 1918. He was lean of feature, sad of eye; I do not know that he was shell-shocked, but mentally he was shocked and appalled beyond prevarication at the amount of misery, pain, terror, and unhappiness caused by the war.

Yet the drama was not over till peace with Germany was signed; so after a hurried leave of ten days, spent at Rupert's home, he returned to the Army now marching on Cologne. His much-improved wife, having survived about five deadly diseases in twenty years, was so cured by the misery she had dealt with as a hospital nurse that she entered into something like enjoyment of restored life. Her children, as related in a previous chapter, had been doing well. She found her husband's interests in dogma, ecclesiastical vestments, and elaborate High Church practices

had absolutely faded away. He was even doubtful as to whether there was any Divinity in the universe; though he hid his doubts within a weary bosom, asking only during the next few years for enough income to live on respectably and for palatable food to digest.

The Tipperary couple also had been drawn by the war more into the general lines of life, and away from an exceedingly abstruse astronomy. Lord Tipperary now attended many a debate in the House of Lords; he sat as Baron Tregellan, his father's third and English or Welsh title. Society had long since forgotten that his wife had been an Irish tenant's daughter: her looks, her speech, her dress had become those of any other peeress.

Aunt Charlotte, dear soul, had died in 1916.

Rupert's innumerable war services were rewarded rather faint-heartedly by a baronetcy in 1919. So far from helping him to return to Parliament in the winter of 1918, his war work and the frequent absence from legislation which it involved seemed to turn against him. He was defeated at North Marylebone. It was then that the Government as a poor consolation made him a baronet, so that for a year or two he went about with Addie as Sir Rupert and the Lady Adeliza Cuthbertson. His peevishness brought him into closer relations with the Worbarrows, the Semlins, the Howard-Jacksons, Dr. Mingrelius, and other prominent speakers and thinkers on the Labour side. He had grown too weary, too contemptuous of the British electorate. But when in the beginning of 1924 the Labour Party came into power, he was,

as you know, raised to the peerage as Lord Cuthbertson, and in that capacity became Secretary of State for the Colonies.

'Such news, dear, such *delightful* news!' exclaimed Addie, soon after her husband's unexpected elevation to this harassing post. He had come in for a cup of tea and a rest before proceeding to the House of Lords, where there would be a debate on some question involving Australian interests. 'Justy is coming to England, and expects to arrive with her husband and the two children—only they must be grown up by now—some time in the autumn. Her husband has been appointed either High Commissioner or Agent-General—she is not sure which—I expect *you* know all about it, and heard the news before I did!—So they are coming to London for several years, and think it is a grand opportunity to bring their boys over for a university education. . . . She is brimming over with delight, and whether she will *ever* have the heart to go back *I* don't know, but she declares she intends to do so, and to end her days in Australia. Here, read her letter, and see how she imagines we shall look upon her as "a bushranger," and all the new things she will have to learn. Why, at Sydney in some respects I thought they were in advance of London. . . .'

Justy followed up this letter six months later by arriving with her husband and her two boys in October.

When they passed into the inner hall, she explained the two boys by saying, 'Marcus, our eldest, is twenty—he 's nice-looking, don't you think? But I did not feel as though he was *quite* ripe for an Australian career without me to look after him, so I decided to bring him over to try an English university course. I don't think he is old enough to marry for several years, and he is not even engaged. And Joseph—poor Papa's namesake—I only call him Joseph on an occasion like this—he has got a second name—Henry—as you ought to remember—Joseph is only an over-ripe schoolboy, and will be all the fitter for a polishing-up at Oxford or Cambridge. At any rate the dears are with us here, and so I have no heart-break or sense of anxiety. And here, of course—though he is looking after the luggage—is *the* Henry. I think you must remember—it was in all the papers—that after he was appointed High Commissioner he received a knighthood, so is now Sir Henry, and full worthy of it. . . . *Now*, Henry dear, *don't* worry any further over the luggage. We have only brought a small quantity, and have stored the rest in some warehouse of the Steamer Company till we get settled. We have little more than tourist clothes with us. Are you actually going to try to put us up for the first few days?'

'*Indeed* we are. Two of our boys are at school, and that provides a bedroom each for Marcus and Joseph—I shall soon get to calling him Joe, it is so much more friendly. But an English hall is

always draughty. Come in, and upstairs, and believe yourselves most *heartily* welcome.'

Rupert was away at the Colonial Office, and his eldest son was in the City. The father had resigned any lingering business connection with the Borderland Mining Company upon entering the Labour Ministry. In any case he had been on the verge of doing this, and of gradually bringing up Rupert junior to take his place. Henry and Justy and their two boys—fine specimens of young Australian manhood—after washing and hair-brushing were adjourning to Addie's writing-room for a cosy cup of tea; but at the threshold Addie urged the males to pass across and either await her return as hostess or, if they couldn't wait, to make and pour out tea and satisfy their hunger on the many delicious condiments provided. 'Mother is sitting in state in the drawing-room, having tea, but impatiently awaiting her eldest daughter. Mrs. Cranford is with her—you remember Molly Cranford, Justy, when she was Molly O'Flaherty and lived with her uncle, Sergeant Crommelin?—well, as Mother is a little tottery nowadays, I thought she should see Justina first, and then the rest of you when she has had her tea to herself in the drawing-room. She lives quite near us here, you know; and after she has seen you all, Molly will escort her back home. Meantime be good, quiet boys till we return!'

The stately though rather shaky Lady Tipperary rose to her feet with the aid of her stick and advanced to meet her daughters when they entered, while at

the same time Mrs. Cranford tactfully withdrew. The Dowager Countess had not seen Justina for more than twenty years, so it was not remarkable that both of them showed emotion. Addie busied herself attending to a Grevillea plant in an elaborate pot-cover—Grevilleas are found under these circumstances in the humblest of homes, but in Sussex House they entered almost of right, being of Australian origin. When she had made it tidy, her mother and Justy were seated and composed, and Justy was relating in detail the principal episodes of the voyage. Then her mother was told that she must go and finish her tea, but that Justy's husband and her boys should come in presently and pay their duty to mother-in-law and grandmother. But Lady Tipperary was so—'bucked-up is the *only* term to describe it,' said Addie afterwards, in relating the incident—that she said she wouldn't be left alone to await their incoming, that she would—if Justy could lend her a guiding arm—return with her daughters to the writing-room and there embrace Henry—'He 's now *Sir* Henry, I hear, my dear'—and the two grandsons. The elder of these she had seen when it was a baby of four months, suffering from an Australian form of 'thrush.' The younger—'whom you named after your dear father: I thought that *so* sweet of you, Justy, because I had not even *asked* you, knowing how completely the name "Joseph" had gone out of fashion'—had been born after her departure from Australia.

And so the three made an impressive entry into

the pleasant little room, wherein the three males had been so interested in inspecting Regent's Park and its autumn foliage that any thought of broaching the preparation of tea had never entered their heads. And when it was made by Addie, her mother said she would really try a second cup, that she hadn't enjoyed the solitary tea in the drawing-room at all, though it was kind of Addie to think of her nerves; but her joy in seeing Justy after twenty years was so great that nerves took a back seat and hadn't obtruded themselves. Marcus, his grandmother declared, she would have recognized anywhere, though he was only a few months old when they last met: he had his mother's eyes. But—as she glanced from one brother to another—she was not sure but Joe would be her greater favourite of the two. 'It was so sweet of you, Justy, to name him after his grandfather, and without any pressing from me. . . .'

And now here was Lord Cuthbertson arriving, and Addie was going out to greet him and to intercept the motor, so that it might take Mother back, with Mrs. Cranford to see her safely home—and then once more they gathered round the tea-table in a firelit glow, and Regent's Park outside was settling into a blue vagueness.

'I have heard,' resumed Justy, after cordial greetings to her brother-in-law, 'in my letters from home all about Charles—Nenagh, as we used to call him—and I suppose later on we shall run down to his place in Radnorshire. Gladys, I hear, has gone back to

Ireland; dear old Aunt Charlotte is dead; Branksome we saw in Egypt on our way through the Suez Canal—he actually deigned to pay us a special visit at Port Said! Donald—Addie says—is in Ireland with his wife and family; Clarry has gone abroad with her second husband; and now there remains only one other near relation to be asked about: Herbrand, or Bertie as we used to call him in our childhood.'

'Well, of course,' answered Addie, handing Rupert his tea, 'you have heard by letter of his re-marriage to his first wife? She lives quite near us here. I would have had her over to meet you, but she is travelling abroad with Herbrand, who has always been something of an invalid since he was badly wounded at Givenchy. His children by the second marriage are both of them at school—they are quite happy: I look after them in their holidays if their mother and father are away — and her child by Herbrand is travelling with them abroad. There has been no picturesque tragedy in their case.'

'Then there is your daughter Sara,' resumed Justina, still questioning. 'I have never seen her, but in your letter you talk about her marriage to young Mr. Seabright.'

'Yes, it was rather a short courtship, but both parties were very decided about marrying one another. Geoffrey Seabright is the heir to his father, who is now Lord Ringwood. I don't think he has got much money, but he has got an appointment under the Colonial Office, and Rupert gave Sara enough funds to produce £500 a year, and she is down in our

respective wills for a little more. You will meet her presently, here probably, and you can then or afterwards form an opinion about her, if you want to. I think she is extraordinarily clever, and she is distinctly nice-looking, though rather small and short. This was a little disappointing to me, because both Rupert and I are tall, stout people ; in fact, I have had to take precautions in diet and exercise and other things to avoid growing too stout. Don't you think I am very much extended since 1914, and still more since 1900 ? '

' Yes, you are. *I* seem to have grown thinner of late years—more lanky ; in fact, if I had not had so happy a life, such *dear* children,' and she gazed round affectionately on her still munching offspring, ' I should have grown tragic. I always tell Henry I was built for quite a different career ; but Australians generally make the best of husbands, once they are married.'

Henry grinned sympathetically, and then asked Rupert one or two very strait business questions.

' And what about your eldest boy ? ' asked Justina.

' Rupy ? That 's what I generally call him when Rupert is present ; but we really must think of some nicer name : it sounds like a sick chicken ! He will be back here shortly from the City. He is a *dear* boy, and has hardly ever given me causes of anxiety, except over health, when he had whooping-cough, measles, chicken-pox, diphtheria, and a knee-sprain over foot-ball, and all the other things boys pick up at school. You know — or perhaps you don't—that we are

nerving ourselves to the idea of sending him out to Australia. Rupert since the war has been worrying about this, that, and the other problem. At first he thought he would like to get Rupy into one of the Government services—Foreign Office, Colonial Office, India Office. The war spared him being impressed into the Army, because he was only eighteen after it was over. However, he himself is keen to go out to Australia and take up the great mining business there; and Rupert, now that he is sick and tired of business—and I don't wonder—after being eight months at the Colonial Office—begins to look upon his eldest son as his possible successor in Australia.

'At any rate, we are planning to send him out there in the autumn of this year; and after he has got thoroughly into the business he might come back home and play a leading part in the company's affairs in London—in fact, be Rupert's successor. We also think—but that perhaps had better not be discussed, except *en petit comité*—I will tell you about it afterwards. The others are still at school. Charley is going to Oxford shortly.

'And now that you have eaten—I am glad to see—a thoroughly satisfying tea, you had better come up to your room and look through your unpacking and lie down and have a rest before you don your splendours for the evening; and then, to wind up—what a darling you are!' she said as she rose, and Justina rose too—'to wind up this memorable day, Rupert has secured a great stage box at Drury Lane, and is going to take us all there to see a wonderful cinema.

He thought that would be less exacting to our minds than a spoken play, because we can talk in low tones at the back of the box.'

'What was the bit of news you were going to tell me about Rupy, your eldest boy?' said Justina, when she had been taken up to her bedroom, had unpacked, had put on a *peignoir* and lain down on a sofa before dressing for dinner.

'Well, I must not stay more than a minute or two more, because, like you, I must dress early, so that we can eat our dinner in comfort before going out. But what I wanted to say about Rupy, though I thought it best kept for your ear alone at present, was that I think when he comes back from Australia he is going to marry Angela Pryce, Merioneth's daughter. She is a very nice girl—a strangely nice girl to have been the daughter of such distinguished, "prominent" people; but she and Rupert conceived an affection for one another when they were little more than boy and girl. It was partly the link of Australia, and partly their meeting here in Regent's Park. That is one of the things, at any rate, we are looking forward to.'

Rupert had to resign, of course, with the rest of the Labour Ministry at the close of 1924. He felt he had rendered considerable service to the Colonial Office, but his comments on this, that, and the other colleague, on this, that, and the other development of Labour policy, were perhaps too bitter to be repro-

duced as uttered. Moreover, the intimates to whom he spoke thus frankly were very few in number, chiefly his own or his wife's relations or connections. One or two feeble efforts were made by persons of influence in Australia or in England to get him nominated for one of the Australian governorships before the power to do so fell from the hands of the Labour Party; though the Conservatives who followed in the seats of power were equally well inclined towards the idea. But he intimated quite plainly and decisively that he had made his home in England and did not wish, at the age to which he had attained, to uproot his wife and children and go to the other side of the world. He wished now to enter upon a period of rest and reflection. 'I have expressed many ideas during the last twenty years; I want now leisure to reflect on them, and to assure myself that they were just ideas and to be persisted in. I want time to study and consider before I give forth my final opinions. If I decide that I have worked along right lines, I hope my eldest boy will succeed me as a propagandist.'

And where for these purposes was he to live?

'I think,' said Addie when this matter was being discussed, 'or rather, I do *not* think, we will give up dear old Sussex House, especially now that Regent's Park is passing out of the stage of utter, blank hideousness to which it was being reduced by the military authorities. They have removed all the huts and sheds of corrugated iron with which they had covered half the Park during the war. The Zoo

after all is reviving and looking about itself—I wish it could obtain some extension; it might well be granted another quarter of the Park area for the pleasure it gives and the interest it inspires; but we cannot expect that most crusted, antiquated Office of Works to entertain any such idea. . . .'

'No, if we say too much about the Zoo we shall rouse the Office of Works to active malevolence. But were you going to say that you wanted to move down into the country?'

'Yes, that was what I was leading up to. I suppose I too am growing old, and our family of five children are beginning more and more to dominate my thoughts. I am wanting, after all, a country home, if we can find such a thing in 1925—I mean, a place not too desperately far from London, and yet where we shall not find London cropping up in the form of aggressively new villas and London newspapers—you know what I mean. If it were not for the turn politics have taken, and the distance and the sea journey, I should like to go back to dear old Ireland; but dear old Ireland has ceased to exist. Our last visit to Toomyvara caused me great depression, now that Aunt Charlotte is dead. Charles, when he is not in London, lives more than ever in Radnorshire, now he has installed his telescope on a Welsh site. I believe he is thinking of selling Toomyvara if he can find some position for Donald, now that Donald's married. I'll tell you what, dear: you want a holiday, and so do I. March is not a good time of the year for country excursions; but let us go, just we two and Anderson'

(the chauffeur) 'for ten days' holiday: let us motor along the Dorsetshire coast, through parts of Somerset that are not yet made ugly—Devonshire, you say, is all corrugated iron, or will be before long. If the weather was fine and we were in good spirits, we might look up Charles at Plas Dorfidd—he has so often pressed us to come. And somewhere between Dorsetshire on the south and Radnor and Shropshire on the north we might find a little country home. How much a year have we got to spend nowadays, after all your charities and sacrifices for relations on both sides?'

'Well, as you know, during the ten months in which I have been a Minister the whole of my Ministerial pay has gone in the charges imposed on me—the keeping of an extra chauffeur and two extra motors, subscriptions to Colonial charities and institutions, a *fearful* scale of hospitality here and about Westminster—everything else connected with office. But we still have, tied up securely, your marriage settlement, and some six thousand a year we are going to leave to our children. I think, therefore, now Sara is married, and I have played out my part in the world and can now sit and watch the struggles of my successors—I think we can afford a quiet country home, more for you and me than for our children.'

'Yes, my heart warms to the idea. I shall take up gardening and grow bulbs, and you might do a tiny amount of farming. I have longed—do you know?—to resume *riding* again. It would be *such* a pleasant, old-fashioned relapse.'

'Do you know what Dr. Breslau said to me the other day when I went to see him about my knee? I rather discussed with him then the idea of our finding this retiring snuggery in the country. He strongly backed it, and said if I wanted to create a local interest there, I should breed *pigeons*—not monstrosities, such as most pigeon-breeders nowadays fancy, but pretty, comely breeds of them—Black Fantails, Turbits, Jacobins, and Carriers that did not wish to fly too far—only wished to circulate in the parish. I rather like the idea. And Radnorshire distinctly appeals to me. We have always liked Charles. In fact, it has only been the distractions of beastly politics that have kept us from seeing much more of him. I shall not take up astronomy myself, but it will be a stimulus to learn from him once or twice a month of some further discovery he has made.'

THE END

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